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# THE OTHER LIFE.





# THE OTHER LIFE.

BY

WM. H. HOLCOMBE, M.D.,

AUTHOR OF "OUR CHILDREN IN HEAVEN," "THE SEXES HERE AND HERE-  
AFTER," "IN BOTH WORLDS," ETC. ETC.



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TO  
THE MINISTERS  
OF  
THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST,  
WHO PREACH TO THEIR CONGREGATIONS  
"THE LIFE EVERLASTING,"  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME  
IS  
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



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THESE are not the speculations of fancy invading the sanctuaries of the soul; nor the wandering dreams of imagination mistaking the beautiful for the true. They are veritable pictures of the life to come. To the mind that can appreciate their truth they are more valuable than any philosophical or scientific discoveries. They give a light to the intellect and a joy to the heart unknown to previous Dispensations. It is needless for me to disclaim any right of possession in these sublime revelations. They have been drawn from the pages of Emanuel Swedenborg, the divinely commissioned Interpreter of the Word of God.

For that reason they have nothing in common with the doctrines so widely disseminated under the name of Spiritualism.

Many Christians reject instantaneously the idea that man, while living upon this earth, can receive any revelation of the other life.

They quote from Paul to the Corinthians :

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him—”

Let them finish the verse, and reflect on its meaning:—“But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.”

Rev. F. W. Robertson, one of the most eminent of modern thinkers, says of this text :

“In the quotation of this verse a false impression is often evident. It is quoted as if the apostle by ‘the things prepared’ meant heaven, and the glories of a world which is to be visible hereafter, but is at present unseen. This is manifestly alien from his purpose. The world of which he speaks is not a future but a present revelation. God *hath* revealed it. He speaks not of something to be manifested hereafter, but of something *already shown*, only not to the eye or the ear.”

A fearful sentence from the Bible is sometimes cited with the expectation of instantly silencing

any one who thinks he may tell us something of the world in which we are to live for ever :

“ If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.”

Examine the verse closely, and you will discover that this curse is pronounced against those who presume to add anything to “ the prophecies ” contained in the Book of Revelation, a book written by John, and not recognized as a sacred book nor bound up with the other Scriptures until hundreds of years after. This verse, therefore, could have no reference to the Bible as a whole, for the biblical canon had not been decided at the time the verse was written.

A man might describe heaven and hell truly and most minutely without adding an iota to the Bible ; for the Bible is a revelation, not of heaven and hell, but of the Divine Law

Nor is the unfolding of the spiritual sense of the Bible any addition to it. It is simply a bringing to view of what was already there, and not heretofore discovered. As well might we say that he who reveals the laws of the human mind, adds something to the anatomy of the human body.

These are examples of the unfair arguments frequently adduced against the claims of Swedenborg. Let the candid and truth-loving Christian refuse longer to be blinded by such sophistries.

It is not, however, merely to gratify an excusable curiosity, that I endeavor to popularize the teachings of Swedenborg about the other life. It is because they are so intensely practical, so transcendently valuable in the conduct of this life, in the illumination of the intellect, and as a stimulus and guide in the great work of individual regeneration. They contain moreover the elements of a philosophy which will remove the objections of the skeptic, dissipate the doubts of the Christian, and, overcoming all obstacles, finally unitize the Church of God.

W. H. H.

NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 1870.

# THE OTHER LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HOW CAN WE KNOW ANYTHING OF THE OTHER LIFE?

**T**HE other life?

The skeptic looks into the grave of his friend and scornfully mutters:

“There *is* no other life. Who has returned from the dead and told us of it? If there be a God, why has He not revealed it so fully that all may be satisfied, and so plainly that no man can mistake his meaning?

‘The grave’s mouth laughs into derision  
Desire and dread and dream and vision,  
Delight of heaven and sorrow of hell.’”

The Christian clasps his beloved Bible to his heart and meekly exclaims:

“This is my pledge of immortality. Keeping



these divine laws, I am assured of eternal life. What form I may have, where I may be, what I shall do, what laws and phenomena exist in the other world, I do not know, nor is it essential that I should inquire."

And so men pass from a temporal to an eternal state of being in a strange apathy respecting subjects of supreme value, as ignorant of the future that awaits them as the unborn babe is of the world into which he will be ushered.

Is this right? Is it necessary? Is it inevitable?

The skeptical philosopher affirms that there are positive limitations to human thought; that no possible scientific development or research can ever lead us to a knowledge of the soul and its destinies; that the existence of a spiritual world is a mere hypothesis, and all theology the offspring of dreamy abstraction and idle speculation.

The Christian concedes the finiteness and feebleness of the human understanding, and correctly infers from it the necessity of revelation. He accepts the Word of God as the revelation of a moral law. Assured of a blessed immortality, he asks for no special unfolding of the life to come. Indeed he persuades himself that God has intentionally and wisely kept us in ignorance of the laws

and phenomena of the spiritual world : and that it is best for us to know little and think little of what seems to be concealed, and forbidden ground.

Is not this a hasty conclusion, an unfounded assumption, a fatal mistake? Would not a clear knowledge of the soul and its future surroundings throw an invaluable light upon the mysteries and conduct of this life? Is not this world, indeed, an insoluble enigma only because its connection with the spiritual world is not explained? How thoughtless to suppose that God designedly conceals from us the knowledge we most require! Our grossness, our sensuality, our worldliness, our moral obliquity, our spiritual blindness shut heaven and the angels from us. The revelations given to us are necessarily adapted to our own states. God ever bends lovingly down toward us, ready to flood our spirits with light. The solution of our darkness is simply this : the Church and the world have hitherto not been prepared to receive a revelation of the life to come, which must necessarily embody a new and sublime philosophy of mind and matter.

Are they now prepared? Are they at least preparing?

Many good Christians, full of faith and zeal,

loving the Word of God sincerely, and experiencing in their own hearts the spiritual blessings it promises, live in a state of serene indifference amounting almost to torpor. Thinking, as we may say, from the affections rather than from the intellect, they pass their lives in a delicious day-dream of the sufficiency and infallibility of the Christian theology. They are ignorant or unconscious of the storms that are raging without and within the Church. They see no decay of its strength, no eclipse of its faith, no disintegration of its elements. They have never had the critical and rational spirit awakened in their minds, so as to discover the insecurity of their ground and the difficulties of their position.

The critical spirit, which is the rectifying or verifying power of the mind, arises spontaneously in the natural evolution of the human intellect. One of its earliest manifestations in Europe was the great Protestant battle for the right of private judgment. It has been the means of the emancipation of thought from the subtleties of metaphysics and the despotism of theology, which had their rise in the infancy and childhood of society. The reaction of the critical spirit against the conservative and dogmatic elements which are

grounded in conventionalisms, is undoubtedly the cause of all the progress and liberty we have achieved in these modern times.

The weapon of the critical spirit is analysis. It dissects, searches, scrutinizes all things, and subjects every element to the test of reason and to the processes of inexorable science. It dissipates error, exposes fallacy and pretension, and separates the true from the false. It has no creed but truth, obtained by the study of facts and the universal organic laws which connect them together. Repudiating tradition and authority, it renders allegiance only to experiment, observation and reason.

This free spirit of inquiry has been turned with special earnestness to the analysis of the Bible and its claims to supernatural origin. Its decisions have been steadily adverse to those claims; and this is the true cause of modern infidelity with its innumerable phases, from the open atheist who scoffs at mystery and miracle, to the sincere thinker in the pulpit, who is secretly troubled in spirit at the doubts he cannot control and the questions he cannot answer.

The exercise of the critical spirit in the Church itself, has thrown its elements into a fearful state of ferment and dissension. The difficulty has been

twofold: to reconcile the literal interpretation of the Bible with the increasing demands of reason and science; and to exonerate dogmatic theology from the charges of inconsistency, fundamental error and sheer incomprehensibility. The conservative element struggles earnestly to preserve the old landmarks. The radical element, outweighing it in intellect if not in numbers, would readjust the formulas of faith in correspondence with the reasonable demands of the critical philosophy. So the Church presents the singular spectacle of a vast body of men held compactly together by faith in God and the moral law, but repelled from each other by different and irreconcilable opinions.

How long is this to last? Where is it to end? Has the Church, *with its present resources*, the means of defence and recuperation, the power of harmonizing the discordant element within, and of converting the skeptical element without? Unquestionably not. Unless additional light from heaven is granted for its moral and intellectual renovation, its gradual disintegration and decay are inevitable, and it will fall a prey to time and the contending elements.

He, however, who has studied wisely the move-

ments of Providence, will have no fear that the Church of God will perish or his Word fail.

Skepticism, growing up amid a general stimulus and collision of thought, is not the formidable enemy of the Christian religion that it seems to be. It is in reality a friend in disguise. It exists by divine permission and is overruled by Divine Providence for his own ends. In barbaric and half-civilized countries, where superstition and despotism reign, *there are no skeptics*. The undeveloped reason lies impotent at the feet of a childish imagination. Skepticism is a necessary and salutary phase in the ordinary evolution of the mind. By detecting and exposing error it prepares the way for the advent of truth. It is aggressive and destructive, but it is transitional. As evil spirits are permitted to tempt us, to stir up our wicked lusts and thus reveal us to ourselves, so skepticism comes to agitate our minds, disturb our false peace, and discover the nature and extent of our intellectual darkness.

For, if the Christian religion as now promulgated were a perfect and coherent system of truth, *there could be no skepticism*, for it would have fulfilled its mission. If the Church met promptly and fairly all the rational objections which have

been propounded, if it satisfied the cold and critical reason as well as it does the glowing religious instincts of the heart, it would have no opponents but those insincere spirits whose infidelity is really based on their moral alienation from God.

The critical spirit, legitimately exercised within the Church itself, detects and exposes every point of a weak, false or corrupt presentation of divine truth. It is a rough surgeon probing severely the deep wounds and discovering the unsound parts. It excites of course the antipathy, indignation or pity of the apathetic Christian, who would enjoy his religion in peace, and shut his eyes to the indefensible points of his belief.

The critical spirit, like the trumpet of an angel, will wake this unthinking religionist from his dream of perfection; will stimulate his reflective powers, sharpen his faculties, excite his doubts and arouse his fears. He will discover that the prevailing literal interpretation of many parts of the Bible is untenable, and that the fantastic dogmas erected upon it are unsatisfactory and incredible; and he will grope in every direction for that better light which is coming.

Powerful and aggressive as skepticism undoubtedly is, its mission is drawing to a close—a fact of

which the skeptics themselves are wholly unconscious. We see the beginning of the end. The means are already being prepared by which the whole human mind, including all its most conservative and radical elements, shall be lifted into higher and purer light. Difficulties will be removed, obscurities explained, reconciliations effected, the skeptic silenced, and the Christian enlightened, when revelation is seen as a perfected whole, and not viewed in part. Divine truth shall burst forth with new glory from the spiritual sense of the Holy Word, and the prophecy will be fulfilled:

“And in those days the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days.”

How is the skeptic to be delivered from his unbelief and brought back to the christian anchorage? How is the doubting Christian to be re-established and strengthened and comforted? By the combined prayers and faith and reasonings and persuasions of the Church as now constituted? No! By some spontaneous development of the human mind, so that it shall penetrate unaided into spiritual and divine mysteries as it has never been able to do before? By no means.



God has seen from his high heavens that the Church has executed his commission according to the light He gave it, which was only that of the letter of the Word. He has seen that the human mind in its orderly evolution has arrived at that stage when it bursts the bonds of literal or sensuous interpretation ;—a further adhesion to the literal dogmas would be retrograde and destructive. The Church has unconsciously outgrown the old methods of interpretation which were necessary in its infancy and childhood ; and the inevitable warfare between the spirit and the letter is the cause of all its doubts and difficulties and dissensions.

He has come to its rescue. He has come to enlighten, to revive, to bless, to purify it.

God has seen also the revolt of the human intellect against the absurd pretensions of tradition and authority ; against spiritual bondage and priestcraft ; against blind adhesion to literal interpretations which are wholly indefensible ; and against the general inconsistency and unprogressiveness of the Church. He has heard the cry of his erring children for light. The time has come when He will satisfy their longings for truth, answer their hardest questions, grant their reasonable petitions, and remove all difficulties from the way of a per-

fect understanding between the Creator and his creatures.

How is all this to be effected? By light from heaven. By a new revelation. By the opening of the seals which have hidden from our eyes the spiritual sense of the Word of God. In that sense alone lies the illuminating and unitizing power of the Scriptures. It is the inner garment of our Lord, which was of one piece woven without seam from top to bottom. The literal sense is "the clouds of heaven" which conceal from us the pure light of the sun. God is coming down in those clouds and will make them transparent with the glory of the spiritual sense.

When, where, and how is this to be accomplished?

If the honest and earnest dissenting element in and out of the Church—that element which hungers and thirsts after the truth, and refuses to recognize the so-called orthodoxy as truth; if that element could be concentrated and questioned as to its real sentiments, wants and needs, and could make a definite reply, we may imagine that it would be somewhat in the following strain:

"We ask a new and more satisfactory revelation from heaven. It is the one great, urgent, mighty

need of the human soul. The revelation by a written Word, as it now stands, is incomplete. A revelation couched in prophetic mysteries and "dark sayings" is assuredly not a finality. We want that additional element which shall establish its unity, prove its truth and reveal its interior beauty and glory—which shall make it a living and perfect whole, uniting heaven and earth.

"If there ever was any revelation, any special insight into the spiritual world, any vision of angels, any communication with the dead, any manifestation of the Divine Presence, such things are again possible; for they never could have occurred by the violent disruption of organic natural laws, but through the operation of some higher laws of which we are ignorant. The potentiality of these conditions must inhere in the mental constitution of man himself. Their recurrence under providence must be determined by the historical evolution of the Church.

"We do not ask any addition to the biblical record: any new chapter or book appended to the Bible. However strongly substantiated by miracles and confirmed by witnesses, that book might be as obscure and unsatisfactory to future generations as Nahum or the Apocalypse is to us.

We do not ask for more miracles and mysteries, but for rational light on those already recorded. We will believe truth when we see it, without miracles; and no miracles can impose the unintelligible and contradictory on our minds as truth. Not a new Bible, but *a divinely-authorized interpretation* of the old one, is the grand theological desideratum of modern times.

“We do not ask for dead men to come out of their graves and tell us what they saw and heard in the other world. We do not ask for spirits to come and take possession of our minds and bodies and write and speak through us as mediums. Nor for holy men to have visions and ecstasies in which the life to come is revealed to them. These modes of instruction belong to the past. They are apt to be the sources of innumerable fallacies. At the best they are imperfect and unsatisfactory. They are not adapted to the present scientific and realistic stage of human development. Revelations must change their character according to the varying states and progressive evolution of the human mind.

“Revelations are only made through men as instruments of God’s providence. Some man must be raised up for this new and stupendous mission.

We are not all abashed at the idea that some man of our own times shall be prepared by Almighty God for experiences and labors more important and valuable in some respects than those of Moses or John. It is indeed the very thing needed and best calculated to restore to Moses and John the hold they are fast losing upon the faith of mankind. The credibility of the Christian religion depends largely, we think, on the universality and eternity of the laws and principles upon which it was founded. What was possible and probable two thousand or four thousand years ago, under similar conditions is possible and probable now. If human instruments for the divine work of revelation were necessary and available then, they may become so now.

“We cannot believe that Moses, Ezekiel or John had visions of angels and received truth from heaven, unless we admit that it would be possible for a person in our own age to have similar visions and receive still higher truths. We cannot believe that Paul was carried into the third heaven while still living in the body, without conceding the possibility, at least, that some modern Paul might, for the sake of great use to the Church, undergo similar and even far greater experiences. Those won-

derful things were done away back in the ages of myth and fable. Let them be repeated now, with the necessary modifications, beneath the critical eyes of philosophy and science.

“Let the man to whom this sublime mission shall be entrusted, be fully prepared for it by all good agencies visible and invisible. Let him be a man of great intellectual capacity and of thorough philosophical and scientific culture. Let his character be pure and spotless, and let his catholicity be so broad and beautiful that sectarianism would not only be abhorrent, but impossible to his nature. Let him be superior to all ambitions in Church and State, exempt from all selfish and personal considerations, loving the truth wholly for its own sake. Let him be no poet who will see facts through the medium of fancy, and no metaphysician who will mystify by his abstractions, instead of instructing by his statements. Let him be pure-hearted, clear-thoughted, truthful, practical and thoroughly trustworthy.

“Let Providence prepare such a man for us, and in the maturity of all his powers open his spiritual sight into that vast spiritual realm which is said to lie unseen around us; as he opened the eyes of Moses to see the glory of God on the mount; as

he opened the eyes of John to see the New Jerusalem descending from heaven. Let this modern Seer become familiar with spirits and angels. Let him converse with the good and wise of past ages who have gone before us into the land of light. Let him study the relations between spirit and matter; the laws and phenomena of the other life, so far as they may be comprehensible to the human understanding.

“Above all, let him report what angels and spiritual intelligences think of this Book which we call the Word of God; whether it has a divine meaning which penetrates into heaven or not; whether the angels understand it differently from us; and how they elicit its meanings. Let us be able to compare the theology of angels living in the light of God with the theology of our discordant sects. If there be any spiritual sense to the Bible, let his mind be illumined by spiritual light to receive it, and to transmit it to the benighted children of men.

“One condition more is essential to the perfection of this revelation we solicit. It must not be the dream or the vision of a night, or of many nights, but the waking business of a life! Let it last for twenty or thirty years. Let there be no hasty and

superficial work; no hallucinations; no fallacies; no errors. Let this agent of ours, admitted into the courts of heaven and studying for us the deepest mysteries of the universe, have the amplest opportunity to see and hear; to examine and scrutinize; to compare, to test, to verify. Then let him make his full report; his whole soul radiant with the light of heavenly truth, unbiased and untainted by any thought or feeling of worldly origin."

If such were the cry sent up to the Divine Wisdom from the doubting and despairing mind of man, who can say that it would be an unreasonable or an audacious petition? If the theology and psychology embraced between the lids of our Bible are true, this modern seership, stupendous as it seems at first sight, is not only practicable and credible, but inevitable. The sincere Christian should hail the thought of it with joy.

God knows our wants before we ask him. He anticipates our prayers. This very thing, which the skeptic demands as the crowning proof of revelation, and which the doubting Christian desires to relieve him from his perplexities, has been already accomplished! It was a part of the great plan of Divine Providence, foreseen and provided



from the beginning. Revelation has its successive steps and degrees, one unfolding out of and founded on another. This last opening of the heavens explains, harmonizes, and unitizes all the others. Theology and Science are now married, and the truths of each are written upon the face of the other. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Emanuel Swedenborg was the instrument chosen and prepared by the Lord for this sacred mission. He works no miracles to compel belief, but gives us spiritual light to illumine the rational understanding. His own state was the greatest of miracles. What is the miracle of raising a dead man to life, in comparison with the miracle of keeping a living man for nearly thirty years in open communication with heaven, hell and the world of spirits? And this sublime manifestation of divine power is discredited, and looked upon as a case of self-magnetization, hallucination or chronic mental disease!

The outside questions of Swedenborg's authority and credibility can be answered to the satisfaction of any candid mind; but our final judgment must be based upon the intrinsic merit of what he has revealed. The mere weight of his name and character is little or nothing in the eyes of his readers.

The truths he teaches are, like those of geometry, to be seen in their own light and in the relations they bear to each other. We do not believe geometrical theorems on the authority of Euclid, nor the laws and phenomena of the spiritual world on the authority of Swedenborg. They are true in the nature of things; and when once comprehended by the rational faculty, they can never be dislodged from the understanding.

Swedenborg's spiritual sight was not opened merely to gratify our curiosity about the future life, or even to unfold a new spiritual philosophy. Charming and instructive as are his communications upon these points, they are only incidental to a nobler purpose. His mission was to reveal the spiritual sense of the Word of God. That sense pre-existed in heaven before the Word was written upon earth. It has been for ages concealed in the clouds of the letter, and is utterly undiscoverable by the unaided intelligence of man. It is supreme folly to suppose that Swedenborg invented it.

Swedenborg proves not only the inspiration but the *divinity* of the Scriptures. He reveals to us the full meaning of that strange declaration, "and the Word was God." From his new and spiritual standpoint only can we understand the heavenly

truths which are involved in the creation of the world, the fall of man, the flood, the story of the patriarchs, the bondage in Egypt, the return to Canaan, the history of the Jews, the dark sayings of the prophets, the incarnation and glorification of Christ, the end of the world, the last judgment, the descent of the new Jerusalem, and the second coming of the Lord.

This revelation of the spiritual sense is the genuine seal and warrant of his mission. By this alone is his claim to the sublimest seership recorded in the history of the race, to be tested. If he does not draw forth, by some interior illumination, a vast, coherent, comprehensive, pre-existing spiritual sense from the Word of God, then has he failed to substantiate his claims, and we may fairly discredit his statements on other matters. But if he has done this, if the spiritual sense illumines his pages, a further gift from the wisdom of the Divine Mind to man, to be seen by the pure in heart, and to be understood by the earnest, patient, candid, and humble seeker after Divine truth, then is Swedenborg the highest earthly authority on spiritual subjects.

It is because Swedenborg comes to us with the Bible in his hand, and proves his claims to our

confidence by the spiritual interpretation he gives it, that we find it easy to accept his disclosures (always rational) about the life after death, about heaven, hell, and the world of spirits. And because the Spiritualists of the present day offer us a philosophy and theology different from those taught in the Bible, we can give no more heed to their communications than to the whisperings of the idle wind.

How can we know anything of the other life? Not from scientific studies, not from theological speculations, not from communication with spirits, but from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

It is from this source, divinely appointed and rationally authenticated—from this inexhaustible mine of spiritual treasures, and not from any communication with spirits or from any vain imaginations of my own, that I have drawn the interesting and beautiful things which the reader will find in this book. Let him not be dismayed at difficulties. The subject must unfold gradually. Each succeeding chapter will throw some light upon all that has gone before.

## CHAPTER II.

### OUR SPIRITUAL BODIES.

**D**EATH is the renunciation of the natural body ; nothing more. The soul then lives consciously in a spiritual world and in a spiritual body.

“There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body,” says Paul.

Natural and spiritual ! We think of one as being something solid and real ; of the other as something ethereal, intangible, almost incomprehensible. This arises from the darkness of our natural state, and the feebleness of our spiritual perceptions. The spiritual has every form, quality, and property which we attribute to the natural. When death liberates us from our prison-house, our conceptions will be exactly reversed ; that world will be substantial and this a shadow ; that life will be the waking state and this the dream.

God has created two substances ; so different that they do not connect by continuity—that is, they do not pass or run one into the other. One is within

the other, like a circle within a circle, but they have no tangential points. They are wholly distinct or discrete. One is physical substance, the other is spiritual substance. They can never be transmuted into each other.

Spiritual substances are really alive, and are the only causative, sensitive, organizing forces in the universe. Physical substance, or matter as we call it, is of itself always inert or dead, being merely a plastic material moulded into definite forms by inflowing spiritual substances. Thus the natural world is caused by and represents or corresponds to the spiritual world. So the natural body is caused by and represents or corresponds to the spiritual body in which the soul is manifested.

We therefore reverse the creed of the materialist, who says that affections and thoughts are the result of physical organization, the invisible secretions of the brain. On the contrary, the brain with its subtile and wonderful forms is simply the result of affections and thoughts—the condensation of material particles around a more living brain, which pulsates in spiritual atmospheres, and which is the true “dome of thought and palace of the soul.”

This spiritual body is not the soul, but an organic human form composed of indestructible spir-

itual substances in which the soul or vital spiritual principle lives and is finited, differentiated from God and from all other souls.

Death therefore does not solve the riddles of metaphysics. Spirits and angels discuss the nature and qualities of the soul just as our philosophers do on earth. The soul in its essence is incomprehensible. It is known only by its manifestations. The rational soul is only manifested under the human form. We can never see or understand God outside of that visible human form—the Lord Jesus Christ. We can never comprehend the spiritual principle or soul outside of some thinking, living form in which it resides.

We need not wonder at this. Thought and perception occurring in our finite organs, have necessarily their limitations, their impossibilities. God and the soul will for ever be mysteries. They are only revealed to us through created forms. We know nothing of heat and light but through objects which are heated or luminous. We know nothing of goodness, truth or beauty, but what we learn through those forms or objects which we designate as good, true or beautiful.

Therefore the spiritual world is organic, composed of parts, objects or substances, arranged into

series, degrees and systems. It is a genuine world, a universe of itself, a cosmos, far more extensive, perfect and beautiful than this. It is perceived or recognized by the same senses which we here enjoy, only far more delightfully and thoroughly. The other life has not only its metaphysics and its theology, but its physics, its chemistry, its botany, its anatomy, its architecture, its art, its government, everything, indeed, which can be made a subject of intelligent study or of ennobling affection.

Those who expect to escape the life of the senses at death, and to rise disembodied into an ether of pure thought, are greatly astonished when they are raised from the natural body and find the other life a continuation of this.

How melancholy is it to converse with a professed Christian who has formed no definite idea of the bodily shape he is to wear in the better life! Who thinks of his deceased friends as disembodied spirits! formless and unsubstantial shadows! incessantly engaged in praising God and contemplating his divine perfections! And these dark, cold, cheerless abstractions, in the face of the living, beautiful, substantial revelations of the Scripture, even in the letter!

Ask this unthinking Christian who is startled



by the assertion that the soul cannot be divested by death of the human form—ask him if Christ did not ascend to heaven with the human body which he exhibited to the doubting apostle? if Enoch and Elijah did not pass bodily into the spiritual world? if all the spirits and angels seen of the prophets and apostles did not appear in the human shape? if his own idea of the final heaven of the saints is not based upon the resurrection and purification of his own gross natural body?

He will be obliged from his own standpoint (which is not ours) to answer these questions affirmatively; but he will not abide the logical issue. With strange inconsistency he charges us with entertaining a sensuous idea of heaven, when we affirm, from the biblical standpoint, that the soul has a bodily human form and enjoys all the senses and faculties which we here possess.

Swedenborg alone has taught us the deep philosophical and moral significance of the Human Form. It is the only form capable of expressing the spiritual life by freedom of will, rationality of thought and the subordination of the sensuous to a higher sphere. It is the form of forms, the central, pivotal, archetypal form to which all other forms in the universe refer themselves. All the

forces, powers, substances of the natural and the spiritual worlds conspire to produce and to perpetuate the human form. And the cause of this stupendous fact is, that they are all animated from moment to moment by the creative breath of God, who is himself a Divine Man.

The Human Form is, therefore, the universal form. God is a Man; heaven is a Man; the universe is a Man; society is a Man; the church is a Man; government is a Man. Men, spirits, and angels are units in these composites; microcosms in these macrocosms, as every atom of a crystal is an infinitesimal repetition of the crystal itself. There is nothing outside of this human form. All inferior forms, animal, vegetable, mineral, are fragments, portions, repetitions, prophecies of the grand type. Everything in nature points, like the old signs of the zodiac, to some part of the human body.

Every living form, vegetable or animal, advances by stages of growth and development to a certain typical adult standard, in which it fully manifests its life and fulfills its uses. Growth and development are different. By development a simple substance assumes a more complex form. The contents of the egg develop into the chick. Food is developed into blood. Blood is developed into nervous fluid. By

growth an organ or tissue, whatever its rank in the scale of development, enlarges in size, density or capacity. When development and growth are perfected, the form is said to be adult. The inflowing life from God which arranges, adjusts and organizes atoms as well as worlds, bears everything steadily onward to its specific adult type.

It is for this reason that infants and children who are transplanted from earth to paradise, grow to be men and women in the spiritual world. The natural causes which produce the development and growth of the natural body correspond to the spiritual causes which produce the development and growth of the spiritual body. It is as impossible for infants to remain infants for ever in heaven, as it is for them to continue infants indefinitely on earth.

But how does the spiritual body grow?

The natural body lives by bread ; but the spiritual body, by the words that proceed out of the mouth of God. We cannot live by bread alone or by natural food. We require spiritual food for the organic spiritual side of our life. Spiritual food is affection and thought ; or in more comprehensive terms, good and truth. The spiritual body grows by the reception of affections and thoughts, by the

appropriation and assimilation of spiritual good and truth just as the natural body grows by the digestion and assimilation of natural food.

To feed a child in heaven is to instruct it in spiritual things, and to inspire it with a heavenly affection for the truth communicated. Infants appear as infants when they first enter the spiritual world, because they cannot feel, think, love and act as adults. But their destiny is human, not infantile. Their organs receptive of divine life must grow and develop. By successive appropriations of spiritual goods and truths, they attain to the form and uses of adult life; and their spiritual bodies grow proportionately until they reach the typical standard.

The adult natural body is kept in life and action by a continual circle of waste and supply, a continual casting off and a continual renewal of its elements. So it is with the spiritual body. It is wrought by means of spiritual goods and truths. It must render back all it receives. Woe to it, if in the spirit of selfishness it would keep anything to itself. It must exhale, radiate, distribute, impart to others all the good and truth it has acquired. It receives only on the condition of giving. Its life is held on a tenure of perpetual uses, of ceaseless,

spiritual activities. The delight attending the execution of these spiritual functions is the blessedness of heaven.

The spiritual bodies in which we find ourselves after death are male or female. Man is man and woman is woman, morally, intellectually and organically for ever. One cannot live the life or fulfill the functions or be transmuted into the form of the other. The anatomical differences flow from the spiritual differences; and both are essential, organic and eternal. Sex is mental. The sexes were made for each other, not only in time but for eternity. It is only in heaven that we learn the true nature of love. It is only in heaven that marriage is spiritual, celestial, perpetual, divine.

There is no reproduction and birth in the spiritual world. No spiritual bodies are born there; they are created simultaneously with their natural bodies, here grow and develop in them and are extricated from them at death by the process called resurrection. But heaven is full of angels with spiritual bodies like ours. Where did they come from? If they were not born there, did God speak them all instantaneously into being out of utter nothingness? No! for God works always by organic and uniform laws; from centres to circumferences, from

atoms to masses, from chaos to order, by definite steps, series and degrees.

Angels were not created before mén, as is commonly supposed. The story of the fall of angels from heaven is purely symbolical. All angels have been men or women on some earth of our material universe. There is no form higher or purer or holier than the human form ; no destiny loftier than the human destiny. The final end of creation is a heaven of angels. If that could have been attained in the beginning by a spiritual creation alone, what were the use of a physical life with all its imperfections?—of a race of men with all their sufferings?

The inference from this is, that the physical universe is the necessary, first-created and utterly indestructible basis of the spiritual ; an inference pregnant with philosophical and theological truth.

The old dispensation teaches that the natural body, after having been resolved into its original gaseous elements, will be suddenly re-composed and then changed in the twinkling of an eye into a spiritual body. A natural thing transformed into a spiritual thing! This dogma, so revolting to reason, science, common sense and a true conception of divine laws, is blindly accepted in the

Christian Church, because it seems to be taught in the letter of the Bible.

More rationally and philosophically, Swedenborg, from actual observation, affirms that the natural and spiritual bodies *co-exist* from birth; that death occurs when their union is sundered; that the resurrection from the dead is the extrication of the spiritual body from the natural, which occurs just after death. Death, the resurrection, the judgment, the end of the world, the second coming of the Lord, all receive far more rational interpretations in the new than were given them in the old theology. Swedenborg's is indeed the apotheosis of truth, elevating it from sensuous interpretations to spiritual life—to divinity.

The soul, therefore, which can never exist or be manifested for a moment without a spiritual body, has on earth an additional and temporary covering, through which it is brought for a while into sensible communication with the objects of the natural world. It renounces this external garment at death, never to resume it, for all the conditions of its being and of its happiness are amply provided in a spiritual world.

We are, therefore, living all the time in our spiritual bodies. Every thought, emotion and sensa-

tion is a condition or state of that spiritual body although we now refer them to the natural. It is through our spiritual bodies that we are brought into contact with spirits, with heavenly or infernal powers. Our affections and thoughts communicate, although we are not conscious of it, with the spheres of affection and thought which exist in the spiritual world. Our spiritual body is already an unconscious, invisible member of some society in heaven or hell. It is indeed continually moving or changing its place in the spiritual world, according to our interior changes of thought and affection, of conduct and life. Our spiritual senses are ordinarily closed during our earthly sojourn, and we are unconscious of this interior or double life. At death our natural senses are closed or perish, and we enter consciously into the senses of the spiritual body and upon the purely spiritual life; or rather the spiritual senses (previously closed) are then opened.

It is because our natural and spiritual bodies exist one within the other, that our spiritual senses may be opened into the spiritual world, and we may see, hear and converse with spirits and angels while still living on the earth. This fact not only renders the state of Swedenborg clear to the mind,



but it explains some of the most mysterious as well as most beautiful portions of the Scripture. The appearance of angels to men, the visions of the prophets, the wonders of the Apocalypse, the transfiguration of Christ and many other mysteries, are brought within the range of intelligent comprehension, and faith illumined by reason is no longer blind. The objections of the skeptic are removed and the doubts of the Christian are dissipated.

No spiritual being ever did or can assume a material form and appear to men. Even God could not assume a physical form except by the organic processes of conception, birth and growth. On the other hand no man ever did or can penetrate with the material senses into a spiritual sphere. Spiritual objects can only be seen by the spiritual eye. Spiritual sounds can only be heard by the spiritual ear. The coexistence of two kinds of senses, one of which is ordinarily closed but which may be opened at the divine pleasure, is the only rational ground upon which a communication between heaven and earth can be explained. Ignorance of the coexistence of the natural and spiritual bodies with their separate spheres of perception, is

the main cause of the prevailing darkness and skepticism about spiritual things.

During our earth-life we seem to ourselves to see, hear and feel only from physical causes. We look downward and outward entirely. We know nothing consciously of our interior, spiritual life. Nature stands before us, as a vast, crushing, inexorable reality; heaven floats afar off as a shadow or a dream. The spiritual is unheard, unseen, uncomprehended: present to us only in the pictures of hope, the whisperings of faith, and the intuitions of love!

At death the windows of our natural house are all shut; the rooms are all empty. The tenement is deserted, silent, dark, useless; abandoned to the ravages of time and the elements. The windows of our spiritual house then open out upon the beauties and glories of the spiritual world. The rooms are radiant with eternal light; the halls are echoing with celestial music; the portals are overarched with immortal flowers. We are thenceforth dead to nature; and our friends, poor prisoners in time and space, see us no more.

How wonderful! how beautiful it is! that both kinds of senses, the spiritual and the natural, can be kept simultaneously open, and that a man can

look out from his double eyes into both worlds; hear from his double ears the music of each, and converse one moment with angels and the next with men!

Such was the state of Swedenborg.

Such was the state of the prophets and apostles and of all men who have communicated audibly and visibly with the spiritual world. The possibility of such a state is latent in every human soul. The probability of its repetition depends upon the needs of the Church and the spiritual development of the race.

The spiritual body which lives in the natural body may or may not be a perfect image and likeness of its material covering. Sometimes it is very dissimilar, so that the face of the external man is unlike the face of his indwelling spirit. The reason of this is, that our natural bodies are derived from our parents and bear the imprint of many hereditary forces. They belong to the fixed things of nature and are only changeable within certain limits. But our spiritual bodies are moulded by our own appropriation of the goodness and truth which Divine Providence furnishes for our spiritual sustenance. As we subdue our hereditary evils and ad-

vance in regeneration, our spiritual forms become more and more beautiful.

- Thus a poor creature, crooked and bleared and
- blighted in body, but loving God and the neighbor sincerely, may possess a spiritual form of exquisite proportions and beauty. On the other hand the most enchanting face and figure in the world may conceal a spiritual body of hideous ugliness—an ugliness occasioned by pride, falsehood, avarice or the supreme love of self.

The spiritual body has, however, a considerable influence in moulding the natural body to its own likeness. If our natural life were indefinitely prolonged, it would probably effect this in all cases. The features of old people reveal their spiritual history. What sweetness and serenity in some faces! what pinched, selfish, anxious, scowling expressions in others! If sin had committed no ravages in the soul, old people would be as beautiful as infants.

How often also are the homeliest features ennobled and beautified by the sweetness and purity of a great and gentle spirit! How often are the fairest lineaments sensualized and darkened by wicked lusts and false persuasions, as the knightly face of Sir Launcelot was marked and marred by "the great and guilty love he bore the queen!"

After death, during the processes of exploration and judgment by which the good and evil elements in our characters are for ever separated, the spiritual body undergoes remarkable changes. In our final spiritual state two faces are impossible. When we die, we drop the natural face which sometimes is a mask concealing the spiritual face from the view of others. Freed from the imperfections of the natural life, and from the limitations of time and space, the soul develops rapidly. The external nature is dropped or becomes quiescent, and the interior good or evil comes to the surface, and stamps itself ineffaceably on the open countenance. Swedenborg says that some persons he had known in their earth-life changed after death beyond the possibility of recognition. These changes were outgrowths of their genuine spiritual characters.

The beauty of the spiritual bodies of those who are principled in mutual love which is the life of heaven, is altogether indescribable. Swedenborg says he saw celestial angels of such ineffable beauty, that the greatest painter on earth could not portray the thousandth part of it. And this beauty goes on increasing perpetually with the additions to their goodness and truth, which are the secret springs of all spiritual beauty.

If the good become so beautiful and the evil so deformed and hideous, how shall we know our friends and acquaintances who have long ago entered the spiritual world? The states of the soul, however long past and forgotten, are treasured up in the interior or spiritual memory. When these states are recalled, the spiritual body may resume the exact appearance, even with all the surroundings, which existed when those states were experienced on earth. Suppose a husband newly deceased wishes to identify a long-lost wife who has become an angel. When the memory of the wedding-night is awakened in the woman's mind, and the states of affection then existing are recalled into activity, the bride of his early love stands before him in the very bridal-robes she wore and with the same face and features to the minutest particulars. So any and every state of a spirit's life may be recalled, revived and pictorially re-enacted. These are "the Books" which will be opened at our judgment.

These changes, representative of interior states, are the only metamorphoses that our spiritual bodies undergo. The idea that spirits can assume any form they please, that they can appear in any other than the human form, that they can descend

into the physical world in a material body, is a vulgar superstition. The spiritual body is to the spiritual world what the natural body is to the natural world. It is a real, definite, indestructible form, composed of spiritual substances which can never by any process get into the natural world and make itself objective to the natural senses.

That spirits sometimes appear at a distance in the spiritual world as lambs or wolves or serpents, depends upon the laws of correspondence and the operation of spheres, which are explained by the constitution of the spiritual world itself. Spirits are not metamorphosed into those creatures, for they appear constantly to themselves in the human form. But those creatures are presented to view as symbolically revealing the spiritual character of the persons they represent. When it is said that the evil one appeared in the form of a serpent or a dragon, it is meant that those monsters picture forth to the eye the corrupt sensual principle which is the animating power of hell. When it is said that the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, the dove simply represents the innocence and purity of the divine nature.

Why does not the spiritual body also die, being composed of organs and tissues so similar to those

of the natural body? Because the spiritual body is the ultimate and basis of the soul, and the soul is immortal. Our natural bodies are of temporal use, because birth, growth, and discipline in the lowest sphere are necessary to the soul in its first evolutions. In due time the soul must expand and achieve the higher possibilities of its nature. It therefore rises from its worn-out and useless natural form, as the butterfly rises from the body of the grub-worm. Does the butterfly ever return into the body of the worm? There are no backward steps in nature or in the soul.

The spirits and angels who conversed with Swedenborg were touched with a certain sorrowful indignation, that men upon earth, and especially Christians believing the Word of God, entertained such vague and absurd ideas about the nature of the soul and the life after death, amounting to no idea at all, and closing the mind by sensuous fallacies against the light of truth. They rejoiced that Swedenborg had been intromitted into the spiritual sphere, so that he could teach mankind from actual observation, that a spirit is only a more perfect and beautiful man, living in an immortal human form and enjoying all the senses which we here attribute to the human body.

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## CHAPTER III.

### OUR SPIRITUAL SENSES.

HE who supposes that there are spiritual essences abstracted from organic forms, is startled by the use of such terms as bodies, senses, sensations, sight, hearing, speech, etc., in relation to the other life.

How can there be any *conscious* life, natural or spiritual, without *sensation*? Sensation, and perception which is only a more interior sensation, are the states of the spirit itself in the act of recognizing the existence and qualities of things.

All life flows in from above. Its forms are studied by observation and reflection, but they must be first *perceived* by sensation. Therefore in the spiritual world, nearer to the divine source of all things, we have life in greater fullness and sensation in greater perfection.

Sensation is effected by contact or a very near approach to it. All sensation is touch. It is touch which brings us into relation with a universe out-

side of ourselves. We touch the physical objects about us with delicate nerve-cells sheathed in soft and pliant tissues. We touch the flowers through an aroal atmosphere which circulates around them as our own great atmosphere envelops our globe. Through the medium of an undulating air, breaking in delicate waves upon our auditory nerves, we touch the mighty organ as it breathes in music and the distant clouds as they smite in thunder. Through the infinitesimal vibrations of a luminous ether, we touch the mountain-tops and the stars and the sun.

Through similar and corresponding atmospheres and media, composed of spiritual substances, our spiritual senses come into contact with the spiritual world. We touch or communicate with each other in our thoughts and affections, with spiritual objects around us, with heavenly societies near or remote, and with God himself. Wonderful and beautiful is the parallelism or correspondence between the natural and the spiritual worlds in all their forms, forces and phenomena !

In the spiritual world as in the natural, there are three discrete degrees of attenuated substances, which receive and present or make objective the influxes of divine love and wisdom into created

forms. The *aura* is the medium of heat, the *ether* the medium of light, and the *atmosphere* the medium of motion and sound.

The aura of the spiritual world contains the divine love in its bosom which is manifested as spiritual heat. The ether of the spiritual world is a sacred garment of light manifesting the divine wisdom so far as it can be manifested to the spiritual eye. These forces radiate from the Sun of the spiritual world, which appears before the face of spirits and angels similar to our sun but far brighter; and that sun is the first and central proceeding, outbirth and objective embodiment of the Divine Life. The atmosphere of the spiritual world is a vast aerial ocean like ours, bearing in its bosom the higher and more subtile spiritual forces. It receives, absorbs and reflects the divine heat and light, and tempers them to the state of the spirits and angels who live and move in it.

The organic forms of both worlds are similar and exist in different series and degrees. There are solids and liquids and gases and aromas, and probably modifications of spiritual substance still more subtile and mysterious. To bring us into contact with all these things—this cosmos which reveals to us the glory of God, different senses are required

and different organs, through which the varying sensations may be manifested. Hence the eye, the ear, the nose, the mouth and the skin, with all their beautiful organic forms—forms as necessary in the spiritual as in the natural world.

The spiritual body has, therefore, its spiritual senses; its sight and hearing, its smell, its taste, its touch.

It is very difficult for persons trained in the old-theology to believe they are dead, after they have passed permanently out of the natural into the spiritual world. They find themselves men as before, in form and structure, in functions, passions and opinions. They are surrounded by a visible universe built up of forms similar to those with which they are already familiar. Towns and cities tower upon the hill-tops or gleam by the sea; the road meanders in the meadow; the river ripples in the valley; the birds sing in the air; the flocks browse in the field; the mountains lift their azure pyramids to the sky; and a great sun shines serenely over all.

The new-comer from the earth, expecting to find himself a "disembodied spirit," gazes around in mute astonishment. He questions himself, into what other strange and beautiful physical world,

and by what miracle he has been transported. Then some dearly-loved one approaches, some friend long lost, long folded from his vision in the light of heaven, and proceeds to instruct him about the differences between the spiritual and the natural world, which underlie the apparent resemblance, and thus to lift the veil of darkness from his spiritual sight.

What good spirits and angels do for men newly deceased, Swedenborg by divine permission has done for the Church and the world. To those at least who accept from his illuminated pages the philosophy of heaven, the Word of God is no longer a sealed book. Death is no longer a leap in the dark, nor the resurrection afar off, nor the spiritual world a dream !

The differences between the spiritual and the natural world flow from the difference which exists between the suns, which are their respective centres, and which, each in its own sphere, creates, illumines and animates all around it.

The natural sun is supposed to contain matter in a state of constant and intense ignition ; whence there are emanations of heat and light. The sun of the spiritual world is *life* itself, the first proceeding from the Divine Essence ; and its emanations

are love and wisdom. The natural world was not called into being by the breath of God and set afloat with independent forces and qualities, utterly divorced from the spiritual spheres. On the contrary it is created from moment to moment by the inflowing life of the spiritual world. The spiritual sun flows into the natural sun by correspondence, and animates it as the soul animates the body. The love of the spiritual sphere becomes the heat of the natural; the wisdom of the spiritual becomes the light of the natural; the organic forms of the spiritual become the organizing, life-giving forces of the natural.

Our natural philosophers and astronomers seriously calculate how long the light and heat of the natural world will last! They estimate the time in which they will be exhausted by radiation from the solar surface. They predict a far-off period when the sun will grow cold and dark, and the planetary system perish in the frozen abysses of an eternal night. Blind leaders of the blind!

The natural sun exists and is fed by the perpetual influx of the spiritual sun into its inmost recesses. Its heat and light will endure so long as the love and wisdom of God, flowing through a spiritual sun, continue to create and sustain the universe.

The earth is established that it can never be moved. The physical universe is the coexisting and indestructible basis of the spiritual. It is the footstool of the Lord.

This view of the connection between spirit and matter by influx and correspondence, starting from two co-existing solar centres, and thence pervading every form and atom of both the natural and spiritual worlds, is alike remarkable for its grandeur and its simplicity, the two essentials of a universal truth. It is the pivotal point around which will revolve a new and perfect philosophy, that shall make more music in the human mind than the fabled music of the spheres.

Heat and light are primary forces from which all others are derived. Every substance has form and properties determined by its relations to heat and light. So every spiritual form or idea has relation to love and wisdom, or what is synonymous, to goodness and truth, which are the heat and light of the spiritual world. This duality of relation is universal. Every thought in the Word of God has a specific relation to goodness and truth, or to the will and understanding, which is sometimes beautifully unfolded by Swedenborg.

In this world we only perceive heat as heat, light as light. We have an intuitive perception that spiritual heat has some relation to love, and that spiritual light is in some way analogous to wisdom. But we have not grasped the idea which Swedenborg offers us, that love and wisdom are spiritual substances and powers acting upon the soul as heat and light act upon the body. In the other life we shall have the same sensation of heat and light which we have here ; but in addition and by means of interior faculties, now shut but which will then be open, we will perceive the simultaneous inflowing of love into the will and of thought into the understanding.

How can it be made comprehensible to the natural mind that the light of the spiritual world is actually wisdom, intelligence, thought ?

Swedenborg says :

“That the light of heaven has in it intelligence and wisdom, and that it is the intelligence of truth and the wisdom of good from the Lord, which appears as light before the eyes of the angels, has been given me to know by living experience. I have been elevated into that light, which glittered like the light radiating from diamonds, and whilst I was kept in it, I seemed to myself to be withdrawn



from corporeal ideas and to be led into spiritual ideas."

Again he says:

"The more intelligent the angels are, in so much the greater and brighter light are they. The differences of light in heaven are as many as are the angelic societies which constitute heaven — yea, as many as are the angels in each society."

In the natural world all men enjoy the same light and see the same objects—because the emanations from our sun are material. In the spiritual world that sameness of vision is impossible, because spirits differ in the reception of the divine love and wisdom which alone in that sphere produce the phenomena of heat and light. Every spirit feels and sees by the heat and light which he has appropriated from the spiritual sun. The light about him comes from within him, and the objects he sees reveal or express to him the divine love and wisdom, as they appear from his own special standpoint and through himself as the medium. This is the secret of the great fact, that every spirit creates his own heaven or hell, his own house, his own external scenery, his own social life.

If your spirit could be conducted through many spiritual and celestial spheres one after another,

you would discover that in each sphere, a different influx of ideas and perceptions took place in your mind. You would be intromitted into states of intelligence and wisdom ineffable. All the learning of all the men in our world would be a trifle to it. It would not be wisdom acquired by your own efforts, but it would come instantly into your mind with the light of the sphere into which you entered. Changes of light in heaven are changes of thought.

If the heat of your life, the animal heat of your spirit, if we may use the term, did not correspond to the light into which you were elevated, that light would soon fade away and all the lightning flash of wisdom it had brought would disappear and be remembered only as an unspeakable dream. This occurred to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, when he was elevated to the third heaven.

In this world where heat and light may be separated in a measure, an evil man may possess much spiritual knowledge, and a good man may live in such mental darkness that he believes the greatest absurdities as sincerely as if they were rational truths. In the other life where the interiors and exteriors of the mind are made to correspond, this is rectified. We only see and understand finally .

what we love; for light comes from heat and wisdom comes from love.

Swedenborg has a beautiful line which ought to be the motto of every church or association of men:

*"Ex concordia lux; ex discordia umbra."*

From union of hearts comes light; from discord, darkness.

A church or society of men banded together without genuine brotherly love, is a mere debating-society where discussions produce only confusion and doubt. The reason why such beautiful light and such magnificent objects exist in every heavenly society is, that the members are organized on the basis of love to God and each other, the genuine source of all spiritual light.

The atmospheres of light about the heavenly societies are indescribably beautiful. Some of them are of silvery, some of golden hues. Some have the sheen of pearls or diamonds or other precious stones. Some appear to be composed of brilliant infinitesimal flowers; some of the minutest rainbows wonderfully woven together; and others of the microscopic faces of infants and cherubs. The light of our world is feeble and dim in comparison with the flaming splendors of those heavenly societies in which the love of God

is the heat that animates and the wisdom of God is the light that surrounds them.

The appearance of a light or a great light is indicative of the revelation of truth. Moses was called to his task by the light of the burning bush. The divine will was revealed to the high priest of the Jews by the miraculous variegations of light in the precious stones which glittered upon his bosom. The wise men of the East were led to the infant Saviour by the light of a star. Paul was summoned to his better mission by a great light that shone on his way. For a long time before Swedenborg's spiritual sight was opened, he was visited by wonderful and beautiful lights shining around him, glittering prophecies of the heavenly truths about to be communicated through him to the Church and the world.

Yes, spiritual light is truth; and our spiritual eyes are the organs which receive it for the soul's contemplation and delight. The manifestation depends upon the state of the organ. There is a spiritual blindness as well as a natural blindness—an inability to discern spiritual truth, no matter how beautifully or forcibly presented. Spiritual truth cannot be seen by the carnal eye; that is, by men who are immersed in the love of self and the

world, who are busied with the pursuit of money, pleasure, power, fashion, or pre-eminence, and who look to the external forms of things instead of to the interior life.

Our spiritual bodies, which are the perfect forms of men and women, have hearts which beat, lungs which respire, tongues that speak and ears that hear.

“And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sang as it were a new song before the throne.”

The voices of angels are described by Swedenborg as being indescribably sweet and beautiful. He saw a hard-hearted spirit who involuntarily wept upon hearing an angel's voice, for he said that it seemed to him that love itself was speaking. On the contrary the voices of evil spirits are harsh and discordant, and their interchange of ideas sometimes sounds at a distance like wailing and the gnashing of teeth.

The songs of angels, individually and in choirs, constitute one of the greatest enjoyments of the other life. Imagine a city in heaven, every house of which is a palace, and whose architectural glo-

ries are bathed in the purple splendors of a celestial morn. Every window is thrown open to greet the spiritual sun which is representative of the Lord. Thousands of beautiful and happy spirits present themselves to view, clad as the angels are, and all voices join in singing a morning song of praise and joy, of such divine harmony that the whole soul is thrilled and melted with delight. This did Swedenborg see and hear.

Yes, music exists in heaven. It is indeed the voice of heaven, because it is the external form or medium through which the purest heavenly affections are expressed and communicated.

There is more in speech than the communication of ideas. That is but one half of the phenomenon. Ideas in the spiritual world may indeed be communicated without speech. One spirit coming to another takes on his entire memory in a moment, knows all he knows, thinks all he thinks. They can read each other's thought without exchanging an audible word. What then is the necessity of speech? of sound conveyed atmospherically from the mouth of one spirit to the ear of another?

It is because the affections of the speaker are involved and unfolded in the sound of his voice. There is a difference between the words and the

sound. The words convey the sense or idea ; the sound conveys the affection which originated and sustains the idea. Angels can detect in the sound of a man's voice the ruling loves and passions of his soul, and thence the secret key to his whole mental and moral nature.

This is the reason why a thing heard makes a more powerful impression than the same thing read ; why oratory and music are more potent than the divinest philosophy ; and why the pulpit, the bar, the stage, the forum are such mighty powers in the world.

Here, too, we see the necessity of public worship, in which divine truths are presented to the ear by speaking and singing. This is calculated to excite a sphere of devout affections which are insensibly communicated from one to another. The silent reading of a written sermon is a poor substitute for the magnetic fervor of the living voice, and the sweet brotherhood of choral music, which fire the heart with religious sentiment and stimulate the will to the obedient performance of religious duties.

The Christian who is not ready to speak, sing and pray with his brethren, to feel, think and act in a sort of choral harmony with the children of

God, cannot pass the threshold of heaven. He will be kept in the world of spirits until he is instructed and purified, disciplined and trained to a sacred communism, rid of his selfhood and his selfishness, so that he is willing to lose his individual life in the larger life of the body and members of Christ.

We are not surprised that Swedenborg says there are churches and preaching and sacred music in heaven. What could be more rational? They do not constitute all of heaven indeed, but the most essential part of it. The communion of thought and affection thus established and fostered in the religious sphere of the soul, is the true secret of the infinite order, beauty, peace and joy, which reign perpetually in the social and civil spheres, and in all the external relations of the heavenly life.

Sound is to the ear what sight is to the eye. The seven notes of the musical scale correspond to the seven colors into which a ray of white light may be decomposed. There is, indeed, a series of wonderful parallelisms running through all the forms and forces of nature. These are simple repetitions upon different planes or discrete degrees of creation, of the fundamental laws and principles of the divine love and wisdom.



Sight and hearing depend upon the organic state of the eye and ear, those instruments through which the soul sees and hears. Some people are blind to certain colors; some are deaf to certain sounds. There are, indeed, sounds too high or too low to be heard by our ears. The same is no doubt analogically true of colors.

There is a spiritual blindness in which no ray of truth can be discerned; a spiritual deafness in which the voice of God is unregarded. There are spiritual thoughts which have never come within the range of our vision; spiritual harmonies which have never fallen upon our ear. There lies about us, indeed, a vast, invisible, inaudible universe full of spiritual beauty and glory. Our natural eye does not respond to the undulations of its ether; our natural ear does not catch the vibrations of its air. We scarcely credit its existence.

Our spiritual ears, which will be permanently opened at death, may be opened while living, and the voices of angels made audible. The spiritual hearing may be opened whilst the spiritual sight is closed and *vice versâ*. The little child Samuel heard with his spiritual ear the voice of the Lord, which did not reach the hearing of the listening Eli.

When Swedenborg sat in his library conversing with angels and gazing upon heavenly scenes, nothing was visible or audible to friends who might have been standing by. Nor did Swedenborg have any specific consciousness that he saw and heard with spiritual organs. So thoroughly, indeed, do our natural and spiritual organs correspond and fit into each other, that a man with his spiritual senses open seems to himself to see and hear everything, just as he always did, with the natural eye and ear.

Paul was elevated, he says, to the third heaven, and saw and heard things which were unutterable; but so similar is our spiritual body to our natural body, our spiritual senses to our natural senses, the spiritual world in external appearance to the natural world, that Paul was sorely puzzled, and declares that whether he was in the body or out of the body, he could not tell. His sensations told him that he was in the body; but his theoretic faculty demanded to know how he could be in the third heaven with angels and still retain all his natural faculties and sensations.

Swedenborg alone explains this and other biblical difficulties, by furnishing a true psychology, the result, not of metaphysical speculations, but of the observation and study of man from the spiritual

side. And while he lifts the literal veil which conceals the real meaning of the Bible, his own doctrines on every subject are best and most forcibly illustrated and confirmed from the pages of Scripture.

The possession of the perfect human form, male or female, after death, and of spiritual sight and hearing, being conceded, the existence of the other senses cannot be denied. We have smell, taste and touch in the spiritual world. We have spiritual nerves which exactly correspond to the nerves of our physical body. It was in those spiritual nerves, indeed, that all our sensations of pain or pleasure occurred. When we drop the natural body, the real man with all his organs, emotions, thoughts, memories, sensations and possibilities, is simply withdrawn or extracted from it to lead on a higher plane a continued and better life.

Such is the resurrection from the dead!

Odors, like sounds and colors, are representative of the spiritual states of those from whom they proceed. Spirits detect by the sense of smell the quality of approaching spirits. Sweet and delicious odors accompany good spirits as direct emanations from their spiritual life. Heaven is full of the aroma of flowers and of the balmy fragrance of

woods and fields. The souls of the rose, the violet, the mignonette, and the myriads of their charming sisters, float for ever as haloes of sweetness about the persons of the good, the pure and the beautiful.

The sense of taste is very obscure in the spiritual world ; indeed almost null, almost dropped and left behind with those who enjoy the pleasures of the table on earth. There is no cooking in heaven ; no gastronomic enjoyments. Eating there seems to be rare and little, a mere ceremonial, symbolical of spiritual appropriations as the Lord's Supper is upon earth. The reason of this is, that the spiritual body is not kept in form and life like the natural body by a regular supply and waste of inert material, but by a continual condensation or concretion of the inmost substances of the spiritual atmospheres, which concretion is effected by an emotional and intellectual appropriation of the divine love and truth which pervade those atmospheres. The spiritual bodies of infants grow in heaven by this process.

If any one objects to this idea of the condensation or concretion of invisible atmospheric substances into solid forms, we will remind him that it is the very process by which our own world has

been constructed. Our entire globe was once gaseous or atmospheric, then aqueous and afterward solid. The soil we walk upon is a deposit from the atmosphere. Our natural bodies are gases temporarily solidified by chemical affinities.

All the pleasurable sensations evolved from the touch, exist in heaven and in the highest state of perfection. The delights which flow from this mode of communicating the affections are almost unintelligible to us who still linger in the shadows of the natural life.

The sins of the spirit are effigied in mournful symbols by the diseases of the body and the disorders of the physical universe. Painful sensations belong only to the natural world, the world of spirits and hell. There is no pain in heaven.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Physical pain comes from the distorted media into which the nerve-life of the spirit flows, whether a broken bone, a morbid growth, an inflamed tissue or a changed function. Spiritual pain comes from the influx of the divine life into perverted, disorderly and unregenerate spiritual

forms. God flows forth continually with love, wisdom, peace, joy, for all his creatures. They turn themselves away from Him, and all his blessings are turned into their opposites. Love is turned into hate; the true into the false; heat into cold; light into darkness; peace into strife; joy into sorrow; pleasure into pain.

The views of Swedenborg about the spiritual world and the spiritual senses are forcibly illustrated and confirmed by the developments of Mesmerism and Biology, all of which have been made since Swedenborg unfolded the principles of psychology, from which alone they can be understood. He explains in the most satisfactory manner the phenomena of thought-reading, clairvoyance, magnetic vision, magnetic hearing, the transference of sensations, the induction of fantasy and the influence of spheres. These wonderful phenomena, although as well authenticated as anything can be, are still discredited by the theologians, metaphysicians and scientists of the old schools, because they can neither explain nor use them. That order of minds which would not and could not believe, "though one rose from the dead," is not yet extinct."

## CHAPTER IV.

### OUR LANGUAGE HEREAFTER.

**M**YRIADS of souls being given, inhabiting spiritual bodies which see, hear and feel; organized into heavenly societies; each soul full of affections and thoughts flowing down by interior ways from the divine source of all life; some method of communicating their ideas is an imperative necessity.

Hence speech and writing in heaven as well as upon earth.

There is no life without motion, circulation, communication, interchange. The subtile currents of heat, light, electricity, and of aërial and effluvial particles are continually coming and going to and from every object in the material universe both great and small. Everything receives something from all other things and gives something to them. The light of the stars visits not only the planets in their majestic sweep around the sun, but every leaf that trembles in the wood and every pebble that

lies upon the shore. The wing of the bee in the garden beats at the palace-gate of the cloud, and the dew-drop on the flower holds up its little mirror to the sky.

So it is with affections and thoughts, which are spiritual things.

It is the life of heaven to receive affections and thoughts from the divine love and wisdom of the Lord, and to communicate them to others. This involves the love of God and of the neighbor, which is all the law and the prophets.

Affection and thought are united like soul and body, and correspond to each other. Every thought contains an affection as its secret essence and soul. Every idea which one spirit communicates to another, embodies something of his emotional as well as his intellectual nature. Angels continually yearn to give themselves away to others.

There are three great modes of expression by which the spiritual life of one soul manifests itself to others.

The first is by the variations of the face and the movements of the body. These changes in the bodily form are symbolical of the affections and thoughts which produce them. What a world of

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meaning lies in the smile, the frown, the tear, the laugh, and in the numberless gestures of the body! Our perception of these meanings is very obscure and faint; but the celestial angels who can read a man's entire life in the sound of his voice or the shape of his hand, find them a means of perfect communication. The face of nature also is as intelligible to them as the face of man, and through it God speaks to them a language of infinite wisdom and beauty.

This enables us in some degree to comprehend Swedenborg's statement, that this mode of expressing ideas, which seems to us a mere pantomime, is the most thorough and wonderful method of interchanging thought. Swedenborg says: "This speech as far excelled vocal speech as the sense of seeing excels that of hearing—that is, as the sight of a fine country excels a verbal description of it."

The first men of our earth conversed with the angels in this manner. This perception of the spiritual meanings involved in external forms and motions has various degrees of power. It is one thing in the celestial, another in the spiritual, and a far lower and more imperfect faculty in the natural degree. It is perception with spirits; intuition with men; instinct with animals. It is the means

whereby creatures without speech communicate with each other, and seem to exercise both that thought and forethought which we ascribe to reason.

The body in its minutest movements was once a perfect effigy of the soul and its affections. Evil has so far closed our internal or spiritual forms, and separated the internal from the external, that little of this correspondence is left or understood. We still sometimes feel that the eye is more eloquent than the tongue; that a smile or a kiss conveys something which language could but feebly portray; that actions speak louder than words; and that the deeds done in the body are a pantomime involving the secret things of our spiritual life.

Speech, face to face, is the second and most common method of communicating ideas in the spiritual realm. There as here we have all the pleasures of conversation, which is the sunshine of social life. There are happy gatherings of congenial spirits for recreation and the interchange of affections and thoughts. There are schools of instruction where knowledge is imparted with a facility and a fullness, which amazes our torpid understandings. There are assemblies where words of angelic wisdom fall

from pure lips and illumine the mind with a heavenly radiance. There are churches where the Word of God is unfolded with a beauty and glory, of which the human intellect has never yet dreamed.

What language, then, is spoken in the spiritual world?

Earthly language is constructed by the slow and tedious process of passing from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation, certain sounds which represent things or states of feeling, until their meaning becomes fixed and permanent. These slowly-accumulated words, or signs of our ideas, differ and have given rise to different languages, according as the races of men have started from different centres; were surrounded by different natural objects and influences; and were of different mental and spiritual constitutions.

At the very best, the richest, most copious and flexible languages in the world, but feebly represent or bring to view the powers and wonders of human thought and imagination.

The language of the spiritual world is the language of *ideas*, and is therefore common to all spirits. The word used by a spirit to convey his idea, contains in it innumerable things necessary to its perfect representation. When we use the word

“mountain,” we have the visual image of a mountain in the mind’s eye ; but this image is not conveyed by the sound to a foreigner unacquainted with our language. The word used by a spirit to convey the idea of “mountain” to the mind, would involve not only its form and color, height and distance, but the very causes of its formation, the spiritual states represented by it, and its connection, near and remote, with all other things.

Ideas, which appear to us so simple, are inconceivably complex. The spiritual microscope applied to ideas, as we apply the natural microscope to physical objects, will show us that every idea, apparently but one thing, is composed of innumerable other ideas ; and that further analysis, instead of bringing us to some definite end, only opens before us new worlds of wonder.

A spiritual word, therefore, contains and represents thousands of thoughts. The inconceivable richness and fullness of such language make clear what Swedenborg says, that angels can express more in a minute than we can in an hour ; and can convey in a few words what it would take us many pages to express.

We have new names given to us in heaven. No material word, not even the names of Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob, can penetrate into the spiritual spheres. Our name in heaven will represent our entire spiritual quality. Names in the Bible always represent spiritual qualities. The "new name" written on the white stone is the new nature given to us by obedience to spiritual truth. The name inscribed in the Lamb's book of life, is the spiritual innocence of the regenerate. The name of the beast written on the forehead is the quality of evil inscribed on the interior life. The name of God was called unpronounceable by the Jews, indicating that the divine quality or essence is incomprehensible by man.

The words of this spiritual language were not constructed arbitrarily, or adopted by common consent as fixed signs of angelic ideas. They are created instantaneously by the influx of the divine life into and through the spiritual mind, and represent perfectly the affections and thoughts which have come down from within, to embody themselves in communicable sounds without, and be thereby transmitted to the neighbor.

This spiritual language, or language of ideas, is not therefore learned or taught like human languages, but it is organically implanted in every one. We come into conscious possession of it

after death, by a spontaneous process, because we have it here. When we are thinking intently to ourselves, our spiritual body is talking earnestly in the spiritual language, of which we are unconscious. If the Lord were to open the door between the two worlds, and let some angel friend look in upon us as we sit in profound reverie, our tacit thoughts would come to him as rich and beautiful words spoken aloud.

This language has three discrete degrees, and we come into that degree of it which is opened in us by our life upon earth. The angels in the first heaven cannot understand the speech of the angels in the second heaven, nor can those in the second heaven comprehend the celestial speech of the third heaven. This depends upon their different degrees of affection and thought, from successively more interior grounds, and a corresponding difference in ideas and words. The celestial, spiritual and natural degrees of life differ so fundamentally in the forms of their affections and thoughts, that each is a distinct world, cosmos or universe of its own, without any necessary consciousness of the existence of any other.

Still they communicate; for there is a steady stream of influent life all the way from the Divine

Centre through all the spheres down to the lowest and last things of the mineral kingdom in the physical world. Nothing stands alone in the universe. All things cohere, and every cause is traceable to the first Great Cause. How it is that all the heavens and hells, the world of spirits and all the innumerable worlds of men are held together in one vast chain of being, and governed by the same laws and controlled by one Divine Order, can only be comprehended by the system of ontology given to us through Swedenborg.

Man who is born corporeal and sensual and therefore without language like a beast, can ascend through the successive degrees of affection and thought by the opening of the rational, spiritual and celestial faculties, which lie folded away in the mysterious depths of his spiritual being. As he ascends he becomes capable of more and more interior thought and life, and of understanding the language of successively higher states.

The *descent* of affection and thought from the higher to the lower planes is a very different phenomenon. The spirit has left the corporeal, sensual sphere behind it, has ceased to think and feel on the external, rational and natural plane. It thinks spiritually in the degree next above the one

it has left. It has receded from our earthly speech, and cannot reproduce a word of it in the new sphere into which it has risen. The higher it ascends the more it leaves behind, until the celestial angel stands on the serenest summits in the light of God, with thoughts, feelings, language differing from everything beneath him.

How can a celestial angel communicate with a spiritual angel, or an angel of the lower heaven communicate with a man upon earth? By a descent during which the higher being leaves his own interior spheres behind him, and enters into the sphere of the lower degree. When a celestial angel appears and speaks to a spiritual angel, he descends to his level, assumes the form of his affection and thought which exists in his interior memory, and speaks to him in his own language. So when a spiritual angel descends to a lower degree, he takes on the mental states and interior memory of that degree and speaks in a lower and feebler language.

Angels and spirits, however, cannot descend into the natural degree of our life, so as to see our natural forms and speak to us externally in our earthly tongues. Why? Because they have dropped the natural body for ever. They can approach our



spiritual bodies, be seen by our spiritual eyes and heard by our spiritual ears. They then speak to us in our native tongue.

How can a spirit who thinks and speaks from the universal language of ideas, address a man in an earthly language, so that if a dozen men of different nationalities were listening, each one would hear his own language spoken? This apparent mystery is easily explained.

A man cannot see or hear an angel or spirit unless his spiritual senses are open. When a spirit comes to such a man, he takes upon himself the man's interior or spiritual memory, and enters into everything the man possesses as if it were his own. His ideas clothe themselves with words derived from the man's memory, because the spirit has assumed the spiritual state of the man's life and now thinks from his standpoint. When he leaves the man, he forgets every word of human language, and thinks that the message he delivered was couched in his own spiritual speech.

The Divine Wisdom, which is the source of all thought, in passing through the minds of the celestial angels is finitely manifested as the thought or wisdom of that degree of life. The angelic thought, passing down to the next degree below it, becomes

the spiritual wisdom of the middle degree. This, flowing down into the world of spirits, shorn in a great measure of its beauty and power, becomes the thought of that sphere. Passing lastly into the spiritual-natural form of man, it is human thought, reason, speech.—Thus all things are bound together in a golden chain.

When God would speak to man, his idea first takes on the forms of the celestial sphere, and is a communication understood only by the celestial angels. The same idea passing through the spiritual degree takes on a covering or mode of expression peculiar to that sphere, and is a revelation to a lower form of spiritual life. The same divine idea reaches man upon earth and is dimly shadowed forth in some homely phrase of human speech.

This fact, that forms of expression are changed according to the descent of ideas from the higher to the lower degrees, explains our doctrine that the Word of God has meaning within meaning, sense within sense, adapted to the different degrees of life, and that its last and lowest sense, our literal Scripture, necessarily takes on the forms and imperfections of human thought and the limitations and feebleness of human speech.

This Word of God is the Mind of God, the divine wisdom, one and the same, filling all the heavens and reaching down to the earth.

This is the reason why God is omniscient. He is omnipresent, and He takes on or assumes the states of thought and feeling which exist in all the spheres and every infinitesimal fraction of a sphere throughout the entire universe. He therefore knows *everything*, just as the angel knows the contents of the mind of the spirit whose sphere he approaches.

We see only the letter of the Divine Word. We cannot lift our eyes above the feet of the Divine Man, which are "like unto fine brass." We cannot lift them to his right hand which grasps "the seven stars;" nor to his eyes, which are "as a flame of fire."

This letter of the Word is signified by the "clouds of heaven," for it veils the splendors of celestial and spiritual wisdom, and accommodates the descending light to the natural and even sensual states of the children of men. When the spiritual sense of the Divine Word is opened, when it speaks to us in the angelic language, the Lord is said to come in the clouds of heaven (not in the

clouds of earth) with power and great glory, accompanied by his holy angels.

Such is the language of God to man.

The words of spirits and angels represent in objective forms their affectional and intellectual life. Their forms of speech and power of expression differ, therefore, according to their own interior states. Whilst all are wise and beautiful, some are far wiser and more beautiful than others; and the highest delight of those who have much wisdom is to impart it, so far as possible, to those who have less.

Spiritual thought, so full and so symbolic of emotional life, has a strong tendency to take on a rhythmical, poetic, and musical form. The language of angels is more in the style of the psalms of David and of the prophets, than in that of our prose compositions. In some heavenly societies, indeed, their speech is poetry and the sound of it is music. It is probable that the souls of poets and musicians are brought into contact with these harmonic spheres, and derive from their very cradles, by conjunction with such spirits, their constitutional passion for music and song.

Swedenborg says the reason why the speech of angels has a tendency to measured cadence and

rhythmical terminations, is that they can feel and think in societies, or all at once. We can only sing together perfectly. If we had choral thoughts, and choral affections, how much nearer we would be to the angels! How the music and thought of heaven would stream forth from our private and public lives!

The division of thoughts into measured lines containing the same number of feet, represents the unity and harmony of opinion in which the thinkers live; and the termination in rhymes or similar sounds, represents the spiritual affinity or likeness of their affections. This is the reason why music is some heavenly affection struggling for expression in our hearts and lives; and why the poet, whose choral thoughts and feelings reach out to all his race, is the great interpreter of mankind.

In the spiritual world one society can speak to another society, no matter how great their number, as readily and fluently as man speaks to man. They all feel and think so harmoniously that some one spirit speaks for them all; or, to put it more forcibly, they all speak *through* him as a passive medium.

Evil spirits also can unite for wicked ends, and many speak and act through one. This explains

the answer given to the Lord, who asked the name of the evil spirit controlling the poor maniac:

*"My name is Legion ; for we are many."*

The third method of communicating ideas in the spiritual world is by objective means, of which writing is the type.

In the first method, by signs and gestures, the soul speaks through the face and the whole body. We see a faint shadow of it in the wonderful facility with which our educated deaf and dumb interchange ideas. In the second method the soul speaks through the lungs, involves an idea in a sound, and passes it from one to another. In the third it works with the hand or other means, giving the thought an ultimate and objective form and shape, more or less fixed and permanent, thus transmitting it to others without the personal presence of the thinker.

The first method corresponds to the celestial, the second to the spiritual, and the third to the natural spheres of life and thought, all of which exist or may exist in every man, spirit or angel.

Swedenborg says that communication by writing was provided by the Lord for the sake of a written Word, dictated by Himself, involving all the mysteries of his Love and Wisdom, to remain for ever

as the fixed source and centre of life, power and thought to the spiritual universe, and by different senses, opening out into the different degrees of being, accommodated to the highest and lowest forms and capacities of his entire creation.

What a magnificent conception of the nature and bearings of the Holy Scripture!

Between the vocal speech of spirits and their written communications, there is an intermediate or pictorial mode of conveying thought, really the first step toward writing. By a spiritual process, entirely impossible in our physical sphere, the ideas or visual images in the mind's eye, are thrown outward or made objective in the spiritual atmospheres, assuming a photographic or rather a stereoscopic distinctness and beauty.

In this manner every form latent upon the canvas of the interior memory, may be re-awakened to life, and brought out again in apparent externity. Thus every action, event, word and thought of our lives can be reproduced and presented visibly before us. Spirits by this objective method can also illustrate and beautify their thoughts, so as vastly to enhance the delight and instructiveness of their conversations.

Swedenborg says on this subject :

"Once also some spirits discoursed with me by nothing but visual representatives, such as flames of various colors, luminous appearances, clouds ascending and descending, different kinds of small houses and stage-scenes, articles of furniture, persons variously clothed and many other things: all of which were representative of spiritual ideas from which alone their meaning might be known."

Sometimes the thoughts or wisdom of angels in a superior heaven are let down through the minds of those in a lower degree, and presented outwardly to them under these symbolic forms in their own spiritual atmospheres. It is thus, indeed, that the whole creation is a grand representative mirror, a visible symbol of the wisdom and glory of God. It was thus that John saw in the world of spirits, into which his senses had been opened, the magnificent panorama of spiritual symbols constituting the Apocalypse, and to which Swedenborg has given us the key.

God has spoken to man through the Book of Revelation just as angels speak to each other by means of these visual representations. Apocalypse means the unveiling of something which is hidden. The projection outwardly of something which is concealed interiorly, is the same idea in a spiritual



sense. But the Book of Revelation is no revelation to us without a key to the interpretation of its symbols. The meaning of these symbols can only be given us through the agency of some human mind divinely empowered to teach them. This is the secret of Swedenborg's illumination.

The fact that ideas may be made objectively visible in the spiritual atmospheres, is an important element in the philosophy of dreaming, of hallucinations and of many curious mental phenomena. It is strikingly illustrated in some of the mesmeric or biological experiments. In what is called the mesmeric state, the external senses seem to be partially asleep or paralyzed, while the spiritual senses are partially opened. The operator can then make the subject see whatever he chooses; that is, he can project the visual images in his own mind by his mere will, so that the subject sees them as external things. They can be made to see serpents, houses on fire, children drowning, and various terrible scenes,—and their intense excitement and involuntary gesticulations show unmistakably that they conceive them to be as real as this outer world is to our waking perceptions.

A rude system of drawing and painting arose from the attempt to imitate or repeat on parchment

or other substance these visual images made upon the mind by the objects of nature. This pictorial writing preceded the alphabet and books. It corresponds to the pictorial speaking of the spiritual world already described. The Aztec artists thus informed the Mexican government of the landing of the Spaniards, by sending forward rude paintings of their ships, horses, arms, clothing and banners, articles which they had never seen before.

Our highest products in art, in painting, sculpture, and architecture, flow from the effort of the human mind *to make its ideas visible*.

By abbreviations, condensations, etc., of this pictorial writing, an alphabet and finally words were obtained, representative of things and significative of our ideas. In that spiritual language into which we shall all consciously come after death, every letter, point, iota and little curve, not only represents things, states, qualities, and affections, but involves mysteries of wisdom incommunicable to man whose thought is still limited by the shackles of time and space.

There are writings in heaven not produced by the intervention of the hand. These are correspondences of the thoughts and soon fade away. Those written out or printed are permanent, and

the mechanical work is done with such celerity, that Swedenborg says the thoughts apparently throw themselves upon paper.

He saw the books and writings in all the heavens. In the celestial spheres a character somewhat resembling the Hebrew and the Arabic is used. In the spiritual spheres it is more like our Roman alphabet. The vowels predominate in the celestial heavens; the consonants in the spiritual heavens.

He was not permitted to read these books, but only to glance at them, so as to see their general structure and character. He gives as a reason, that it is against the laws of the divine order for man, still living in the natural world, to be instructed by spirits or angels. He must derive his spiritual light from the Divine Word, and from those who are authorized to interpret it. So important is it that man should be protected from all the fantasies, hallucinations, visible images, involuntary writing, aerial voices, clairvoyance, and mesmeric excitations by which spirits would impose themselves upon him as messengers of divine truth!

Whoever doubts that there are books and writings in heaven must also doubt the evidence of Ezekiel the prophet.

He says :

“Now it came to pass that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.”

With his spiritual sight thus opened into heaven, he describes his wonderful experiences, one of which was the following :

“And when I looked, behold ! a hand was sent unto me ; and lo ! a roll of a book was therein ;

“And he spread it before me ; and it was written within and without.”

Some spiritual writings are composed wholly of numbers following one after another, like words. This seems utterly incomprehensible to the natural man ; but such writings convey to those who have the key of correspondence, ideas which are wholly incommunicable by speech. All the numbers in the Bible represent spiritual states and qualities, which have been so clearly unfolded by Swedenborg, that one who has been blest with light from that source can readily imagine that whole volumes of spiritual ideas may be conveyed by numbers arranged in certain series and orders.

In diseased states of the body, when the orderly connection and influx of the soul is partially interrupted, we frequently have the strangest mental phenomena, which receive great light from the

psychology of Swedenborg. I once saw a remarkable case which seemed to have some relation to the curious fact stated in the foregoing paragraph. The patient, who was slowly recovering from an apoplectic stroke, was found to have totally lost his memory of words. When he began attempting to express his ideas, he repeated one number after another at considerable length, as if he was using words. He evidently thought that he was clothing his ideas in the usual and proper manner, for he was surprised and indignant that his meaning was not comprehended. He continued thus speaking in numbers, never, however, in their numerical order, for several months. He was probably connected interiorly with some of those spiritual societies which speak and write in numbers.

There are books and libraries in heaven to which all the literary treasures upon earth are absolutely insignificant. It is pleasant to think that our most charming and ennobling pleasures here are to be continued and intensified hereafter. The sons and daughters of art will pursue their delightful vocations for ever. Every book ever written upon earth might be reproduced in the spiritual world from the imperishable memories of those who have read it. Few, if any, of them will attain this

honor. Homer has continued to sing and Cicero to speak and Bacon to philosophize and Addison to write ; but the works which gave them their terrestrial fame are but the scribblings of childhood in comparison with the labors of their spiritual life, which will charm the ears and gladden the hearts of their angelic friends for ever.

In view of all these beautiful things, how silly and vain is the pride of learning, the pomp of philosophy and the pretensions of science, with which we strut our little hour on the dark stage of this earthly life !

The apparently gifted, wise and eloquent here are not always so hereafter. They are sometimes very stupid, and even imbecile. No wisdom remains with a man after death, except that which corresponds to sweet and heavenly affections flowing from the love of God and the neighbor. All else is evanescent ; mere shadow and fantasy. The pure and humble are always wise and brilliant in the light of heaven. In that kingdom, the last in this world are frequently the first.

## CHAPTER V.

### OUR SURROUNDINGS HEREAFTER.

WITH affections there must be something to love; with ideas and thoughts there must be objects to investigate. With a spiritual body, substantial and real, there must be ground to stand upon; air to breathe; a world to see and feel; other spirits to come in contact with; associations and organizations arising from such contact; and in fine, an external spiritual universe more or less resembling the natural universe we now live in.

Where is this spiritual world? How is it created? What are its laws and its phenomena? What stupendous interests revolve around the replies to these questions! What light their truthful answers would cast upon the great mysteries of life and death!

How singularly averse is the popular mind, under the tuition of the passing dispensation, to think of heaven as a real and substantial state of existence.

Say that heaven is a state of perpetual prayers and praises and ineffable bliss, and you find a ready acquiescence; but endeavor to give it a "local habitation and a name," to describe it and make it credible to our rational faculty, and all ears are deaf to us, all eyes are blind.

The Bible itself is in a measure a dead letter in the eyes of a sensual and philosophizing generation. The very people who believe it and love it and preach it, cannot realize that the Bible shows us that angels and departed spirits are living already in the human form, seeing, feeling, loving and even eating as we do. They forget that the prophets and apostles who had glimpses of heaven, saw there mountains and rivers and seas and fields and temples and cities and animals, and all such visible objects as meet our senses here.

If they say that all these things are symbolical and not real, which is equivalent to saying that revelation is a kind of dream, what will they answer, when we press home to them their own professed beliefs, (in which, however, we do not concur,) that Enoch and Elijah and the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven with their material bodies? How can physical bodies, such as they had upon earth, exist among the unsubstantial



ethers and abstract states of the soul, which constitute the orthodox heaven ?

The glorious things of the life to come which Paul was only permitted to see and hear, Swedenborg, in the fullness of the Lord's time, has been commanded to reveal. Why should Swedenborg do more than Paul? Why should Paul have seen things which the prophets desired in vain to see? Why should the prophets have discerned the mysteries of God more thoroughly than the patriarchs? Because revelation is a progressive work, advancing slowly from the pearl-white glimmer of its dawn to the golden blaze of its perfect day. All things are not done at once. The seed first; afterward the flower; then the fruit! Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, John, Paul, Swedenborg: each had his distinct mission, an essential part of the whole, and each came or was sent at the right time and in the right place.

Every statement of Swedenborg about the other life can be confirmed from the Bible or derived from scriptural statements by a process of logical induction. It is this which separates him entirely from all the spiritualists of modern times. He is pre-eminently the Christian Seer. His feet are immovably planted upon the Word of God. Therefore his

name and his works will grow brighter and brighter in the eyes of successive generations, when all the false prophets and false Christs, both in the Church and out of it, have passed into oblivion.

The mind of man, unilluminated by light from heaven, never could have invented the sublime philosophy by which the Swedish seer has penetrated so far into the mysterious abysses of the universe. The unaided imagination of the natural mind, struggling to frame for itself some idea or visible image of heaven, rushes to the two extremes, materialism and sheer immateriality. Heaven is, from one standpoint, a purely mental state of existence, a negation of everything real ; God is a Being without body, parts, or passions ; the soul is a formless and intangible ether ; its life hereafter is one of perpetual psalm-singing and oral prayer.

The mind which entertains this idea of heaven is like the earth before the creation, "without form and void ;" a chaos, a dark, bewildering abyss. It needs the voice of God to speak light into existence, so that it may think wisely and rationally.

On the other extreme the natural mind falls into utter materialism. Heaven is located in some distant star or sun, or it occupies

"The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud or moves a wind,  
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar  
The sacred, everlasting calm."

If heaven be thus far off in space, they ask themselves, how can any living man mount up to it? how can any one return from it? how can we know anything about it? Very pertinent questions if the premise were true.

Swedenborg affirms that the spiritual world is neither material nor immaterial, but *substantial*; a mediatory form or state of existence between the abstract essence of spirit and the concrete forms of matter. This is the biblical doctrine, and the great Swede, standing faithfully by it, deduces from it a system of truth, which throws a new light upon science, psychology and theology; so powerful a light, indeed, as to make all things new under its magic power.

The spiritual world is substantial and living.

The light of the sun, the glory of the clouds, the majesty of mountain scenery, the witchery of woods and vales, the poetry of waters, and the beauties and wonders of the mineral, vegetable and

animal kingdoms, exceed in the spiritual world anything we have ever seen or felt in this mundane sphere. And the first impression of the newly-risen spirit in the midst of such scenes, is, that they are as real as anything left behind him on the earth.

He beholds about him what appears to his senses an external and physical world, only etherealized and beautified beyond description :

“An ampler ether, a diviner air,  
And fields invested with purpureal gleams.”

He wonders into what serene depths of the abysses of space he has unconsciously penetrated. He does not believe he is dead, or he still waits for his winged angels to appear and conduct him to his imaginary heaven.

He has, however, entered a sphere not separated from ours by time or space ; a sphere not to be reached by ascending or descending ; a sphere into which the light of nature never penetrates, and whose laws and phenomena can never be understood by a mind in bondage to sensuous appearances.

And yet this spiritual world, which is so similar to ours in externals, originates in an entirely different manner and is governed by peculiar laws.

What, then, is the fundamental difference between the spiritual world and the world of nature?

The natural world, or rather the physical universe, is fixed and permanent, being the last and lowest sphere of the divine emanations. It is utterly dead in itself, but is plastic to the inflowing and organizing forces of the spiritual sphere. It is, therefore, the basis, the footstool, the seed-field, the birth-place of all things. The spiritual grows and expands within the natural, like the chick within the egg, like the butterfly within the worm, until it bursts its bonds, and rises to its real and better life.

The physical cosmos has an *externeity* independent of the souls that live upon it, encased in their natural bodies. One sun shines upon all alike. The rain descends upon the evil and the good. Daylight and darkness come invariably to half the world at once. The wilderness does not blossom for our prayers; the flowers do not perish at our crimes. Times and spaces, cruel and inexorable as death, stand between us and our hopes, our longings and our loves.

In the spiritual world it is different. That sphere has no *externeity* independent of the souls inhabiting it. That world is momentarily created by the influx of the divine life through the spirits

or angels who live there; and its spiritual forms and phenomena represent outwardly in ever-shifting panorama the qualities and motions of the soul itself.

Dissect this statement and view the constituent ideas separately, for they are the foundation-stones of the Swedenborgian philosophy.

The spiritual world has no externity independent of the mind.

It has a transcendently beautiful externity wholly dependent upon the mind.

That externity represents the mind; is the mind symbolized or mirrored in objective spiritual forms.

Take away the angels and heaven would vanish.

Take away God and all would vanish; for everything lives, moves and has its being from a continuous influx of the divine life.

The spiritual world is created momentarily and changes momentarily by and through the changes of affections and thoughts in the inhabitants. It changes as the scenery of a dream changes in correspondence with the changes of state occurring in the brain of the dreamer.

Heaven and hell are, therefore, in the last analysis, states of the soul or spirit of man. "The

kingdom of heaven is within you" is the great spiritual truth announced by the Word of God ; and the kingdom of heaven *without* the spirit corresponds in its minutest particulars to the kingdom of heaven *within* him.

"Heaven," said an old English divine, "is a state first and a place afterward." Swedenborg shows that the place is created by the state, changes instantaneously with it, and is altogether dependent upon it.

It seems, at first view, a strange idea that the objects surrounding spirits and angels are created from moment to moment by the influx of the divine creative sphere through the affections and thoughts of the inhabitants. That external objects should, in some manner, represent or symbolize affections and thoughts is credible, and commends itself to our æsthetic sense as beautiful and even true. But that they are *caused* or *created* by affections and thoughts, that they appear, change and disappear with them, is extraordinary to the mind which still thinks from the sensuous appearance of the natural life.

Strange as it seems, however, is it not the simple statement of the law by which all creation is effected—the law by which the sublime panorama

of the universe was projected from the Divine Mind? Has not that universe been aptly called "the created or unwritten Word," spoken into existence by his will, representing in ultimate and concrete forms, by a sacred symbolism, the spiritual life, the infinite love and wisdom of the Great Architect? Is not the universe the mirror in which He repeats his image?

The horizon of each spirit or angel embraces the little cosmos in which his own image is thus repeated. God creates all the heavens by flowing into and through the universal angelic mind as a whole. The small part or infinitesimal fraction visible to each spirit, is determined by the state of his own affections and thoughts, which receive and reflect more or less perfectly the divine love and the divine wisdom.

We may never understand it or explain it further; but the ultimate fact remains, that spiritual forces flowing from within outward, from above downward, from one sphere to another, project or make objective a vast, visible, tangible universe, corresponding to the invisible, intangible universe of affections and thoughts concealed within.

In what other way did God create the world? Is not the universe wrought into forms correspond-



ing to the archetypal images, ideas or patterns existing in the Divine Mind? Is it not reasonable that the surroundings of spirits, who are images and likenesses of God, should be created in a finite manner by the same law which regulates the infinite operations of the Creator?

We can see the beautiful shadow of this same law even in the actions of our minds upon dead matter. What are the changes which civilized man has impressed on the face of nature but projections of his own will and understanding? What are statues and paintings and songs and the splendors of architecture, but the inner lives of the artists wrought out before us into visible shapes?

Heaven is so boundless because the varieties of good affections and thoughts are infinite. Heaven is so sublime and beautiful because the affections and thoughts of angels are so pure and holy. Heaven is continually growing in majesty, power and glory, because the affections and thoughts of its inhabitants are ever expanding, and becoming more and more receptive of the divine love and the divine wisdom.

Each soul, therefore, is responsible for its heaven or its hell. Its own organic structure, its own emotional and intellectual states determine where

and with whom and how it shall live for ever. No arbitrary or judicial decree lifts it to heaven or dooms it to hell. We determine the final forms of our inner universe of affection and thought by our own life and conduct upon earth, and those forms of our spiritual nature determine our external surroundings to eternity.

We have already seen how the character of the spirit gives beauty or deformity to the spiritual body, perfection or imperfection, pleasure or pain to the spiritual senses. The intelligence of the spirit determines what clothing the spiritual body is to wear.

Clothing in heaven? Why not?

Is it not said of the angel who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, "and his raiment was white as snow?"

Did not the women who entered the sepulchre see an angel who was "clothed in a long white garment?" And the seer of Patmos tells us that, when a door was opened to him in heaven, he saw on one occasion "seven angels" coming out of the temple, "clothed in pure white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." Rev.xv. 6.

Let infidels and rationalists sneer at the statement that we have bodies and clothing and houses

in heaven. The Christian expects to live in a spiritual body in which he will no longer see darkly, but face to face; he hopes to be clad with the saints in fine linen and purple; he believes he will be given one of those mansions of which there are so many in his Father's house.

As the garments of the angels correspond to their spiritual states, they change or are changed according to these states. They are of different styles and colors according to the rank and office of the wearers. They are opaque or dull, or bright or flaming in splendor, each and all in turn according to the variations of their affections and thoughts.

These garments are not made with hands. They are given by the Lord, from day to day, from moment to moment. They come to the angels as the leaves come to the tree, as the colors come to the cloud. Our spiritual bodies are arrayed in beauty and glory, like the lilies of the field, without toil, without spinning, even without our thought.

The houses in the spiritual world are not built by manual labor, but rise

“Like golden exhalations of the dawn,”

in obedience and in correspondence to the outflowing spiritual life of those who dwell in them.

Hear what Swedenborg reports :

“I have been with the angels in their habitations. They are exactly like our houses upon earth, but more beautiful. They contain chambers, drawing-rooms and bed-rooms in great numbers. They have courts, and are encompassed by gardens, flower-beds and fields.”

“Where the angels live in societies, the habitations are contiguous, and arranged in the form of a city, with courts, streets, and squares exactly like the cities on our earth. It has also been granted me to walk through them and to look about on all sides. This occurred to me when wide awake, my interior sight being open at the time.”

“I have seen palaces in heaven so magnificent as to surpass all description. Some were more splendid than others. The inside was in keeping with the outside. The apartments were ornamented with such decorations, that no language is adequate to the description of them.”

Heavenly affections, wise thoughts and good deeds are the materials which determine the construction of these eternal homes. We are every day by our life here contributing something to our surroundings hereafter. Not only are our clothing and houses thus created, but the scenery about us ;

the sun in our sky, the clouds over our heads; the mountains or vales afar off; the forest with its green mantle; the river with its silver ripple. Our affections bring the vernal airs about us; our wisdom floods the atmosphere with light; our love of God kindles the sun; our love of the neighbor peoples our spheres with paradises and splendors; the spiritual truths in our own minds build our houses of precious stones, make the meadows green, and the stars visible, and the winds musical:

“And every thought breaks forth a rose.”

If each spirit creates or determines its own objective world around it, will there not be an endless confusion of forms and images, of sounds and colors? indeed, a perfect chaos?

Such, doubtless, would be the case, were it not for the laws of spiritual affinity by which the heavenly societies are organized. Spiritual affinities determine presence or absence in the other life. By the operation of this great force, the good and evil are separated after death. By its still further operation the good are distinguished into different orders and classes. Similar states of affection and thought attract each other, and they project or make visible similar representative ob-

jects. What results? Spirits who resemble each other interiorly find themselves in what we, in the natural sphere, would call the same world, the same country, the same place.

Individual differences between spirits in the same society (and no two spirits were ever created exactly alike) may determine that one spirit lives in one house and another in a different one; that one resides by a river and another on a hill-top; that one is clad in silk and another in purple; that one is a prince and another a doorkeeper; and so on with infinite variety.

These diversities are individual and special; the points of agreement are general. All the spirits in a given society are held together by some ruling love; some similar relationship to the Lord and the neighbor; some subtle and powerful bond of common faith and thought; some consentaneous desire and capacity for specific uses. This fundamental unity or brotherhood of thought and affection causes them to have similar surroundings, similar scenery; the same sun shining before their faces, the same mountains towering afar, the same sea gleaming in the distance, the same city, the same temples, the same civil government and similar manners and customs. There is thus a certain

fixity and permanence in general, within the bounds or limits of which there is a charming and ever-varying fluctuation of particulars.

We see at once that society in heaven has no geographic or national basis. A society of angels is only a larger man, consisting of similar units bound together like the organs of the human body by loving sympathies, each doing the work for which he is structurally fitted, and each finding his own life by expending it for all the rest. Many societies, great and small, are again held together by larger bonds and sympathies and grander uses, and constitute a still greater man. Finally, all the heavens are so organically connected, that they appear to the Lord as a single man. Heaven, says Swedenborg, is the *maximus Homo*—the Grand Man.

His doctrine of the Grand Man, with all its complexities and mysteries, is based upon the transcendent fact, that the universe was created by a Divine Man, in his own image and likeness; and all its discrete degrees, spiritual and natural, are woven and held together by influx and correspondence through the mediation of the Human Form. The subject is too vast and difficult for even a partial elucidation in this little volume.

The societies of each heaven are innumerable. All the members of one society have some general resemblance, like the facial and other resemblances which we here detect in families and races. They all know and love each other intimately with the tenderest sense of kinship. In the other life, indeed, all who are not in similar and corresponding states of thought and affection are, or become strangers to each other, live in distant societies, or even in other heavens.

For there are more heavens than one. The Greek of the Lord's Prayer should have been translated: "Our Father who art in the heavens." Paul says that he was carried up to the *third* heaven. Swedenborg affirms that there are three heavens, distinct from each other, one above or within the other, communicating not by spaces or sensible approaches, but only by influx, like that of the soul into the body.

As all external appearances in the spiritual world are due to differences of affection and thought, the division of the entire heaven or Grand Man into three distinct, discrete, spiritual universes, is founded upon a threefold manifestation of the divine love and wisdom through the *natural*, *spiritual* and *celestial* degrees of angelic



life. The three heavens differ in their degrees of love and wisdom, in their modes of thought, in their organizations, their uses, their clothing, their houses, their external scenery and surroundings; each higher degree being more perfect, beautiful and glorious than those beneath it.

And we, poor denizens of earth, live far below them all! If we turn from the guiding light of revelation and question the cold and beautiful Nature before us about the life after death and the heaven for which we yearn, we are answered only by the blinding glare of the sun, the murmur of the sea, the wail of the wind, the birth and death of the flowers, the shifting colors of the cloud, the blue dome with its unrevealing face and the far-off smile of the silent stars!

Immersed in our sensual and corporeal states; limited in thought and perception by the barriers of time and space; scarcely developed in our most advanced condition to a rational grasp of spiritual things; unable to form more than a vague and pleasing idea of the heaven nearest to our earth; the spiritual and celestial states of thought and affection are almost incomprehensible to our souls; and our ideas of the worlds produced by them as

transcendent mirrors of their being, are like music which can never be translated into words.

Yet even the loftiest celestial height is attainable by men who were born in the moral darkness and gloom of a world so wicked, that the Divine Man had to visit it in the flesh to redeem it from the power of hell.

Man is a microcosm, an epitome of the entire universe, a miniature heaven, because he was created in the image and likeness of God. We have rational, natural, spiritual and celestial degrees of life folded away in potency behind and within the flesh and blood of this corporeal life. These degrees are shut at birth, and are gradually opened by instruction, discipline, experience; by the development of the rational principle, by temptations, by a life according to the commandments; by the reception of love and wisdom from the Lord.

Man's moral state at death, his ruling love, the possibility of putting away for ever the evil, and of developing the good things of his nature; these determine what spiritual sphere he will go to, what society he will live in, what position he will hold, and what surroundings he will have.

All these things are foreseen by the Lord alone. His eternal providence watches over us, to lead us

by ways we know not, from the cold and darkness of our sensual life to the light and warmth, the beauty and peace of the celestial country.

There is a great difference between spiritual thought and natural thought. Spiritual thought is not merely thinking about spiritual things, but thinking about all things in a spiritual manner.

If the angels thought about their external world as we do of ours; if there were fixed times and spaces there as here; if they studied the objects around them in our sensuous manner, and viewed them as something independent of their own spiritual states; then indeed the heaven of Swedenborg would be little better than a physical globe purified and etherealized; such a heaven as the current theology expects when the dead bodies are raised and made incorruptible, and the earth is prepared by fire for the final habitation of the saints!

But the angels do not survey their surrounding phenomena as we do ours. They do not think of the objects about them as something separate from them and independent of them; as something to be studied by observation and experiment and induction, the processes by which our natural sciences are constructed on the evidence of our senses. That would be to think naturally as we do, and

not spiritually as the angel is obliged to think by the very laws of his being.

How then does he think spiritually?

That beautiful and glorious nature which seems to surround him, is a glowing mirror of his own affections and thoughts and those of the angels associated with him. It is an open book to him, whose every object is a word, every movement a sentence, conveying to his mind some spiritual or celestial idea. He does not think of the objects before him any more than we think of the paper, ink, letters and marks of punctuation, when we are reveling with delight over the pages of some favorite author.

Swedenborg says :

“Such is the architecture of heaven that you would say you there beheld the very art itself; and no wonder, for it is from heaven that that art is derived to men on earth. The angels said that such objects as have been mentioned, and innumerable others still more perfect, are presented before their eyes by the Lord; but that nevertheless they impart more pleasure to their minds than to their eyes, because in every particular they discern correspondences, and through those correspondences things divine.”

Yes, the external world of the spirit is a vast series of symbolisms, which reveal to his perceptive faculties the infinite treasures of spiritual truth and the infinite miracles of spiritual love. Nothing comes to him from without, although it seems to do so, but all from within.

The God within him reveals himself outwardly to him as a Sun. He feels the divine wisdom in the light which surrounds him, and the divine love in the sweet warmth of his celestial air. The winds and the clouds denote to his eye the movements in the spheres above him. He draws from his evening stars a spiritual light that emanates from the innumerable societies of heaven. All things are alive to him and commune with him. All things breathe upon him wisdom and love. The forests, the gardens, the flowers, the waters, the mountains, the sea, are voices that speak, and faces that smile, and hands that beckon, and music that gladdens, and thoughts that illumine, and hearts that beat in unison with his own.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SPIRITUAL TIMES AND SPACES.

THE practical man, disgusted with metaphysical subtleties, turns impatiently away at the mention of time and space. Let him give us his ear. He will find much that is novel, beautiful and instructive in Swedenborg's presentation of these subjects. Swedenborg is not altogether free from mystery and obscurity. How could it be otherwise, when he deals with infinite themes and struggles to convey spiritual truths to natural minds? He has, however, delivered us from so many errors, dissipated so many clouds before us, led us to such clear and commanding heights, that we can trustingly follow him on the most difficult paths, assured that if we do not understand him, the fault will lie mainly in the feebleness and darkness of our own minds.

Some will say these things are very strange! as if the strange and new were necessarily impossible! Do you suppose that heaven can be opened to you,

and the laws and phenomena of the other life revealed, and that you will not be startled by anything strange or new? Is it not far more rational to suppose that everything will be novel and surprising and wonderful? Study Swedenborg patiently, ponder in your heart what seems doubtful or mystical, accustom your mental eyes to the great splendor of the light he gives, which almost blinds you at first, and you will gradually discover more spiritual truth in his pages than is contained in all the libraries of the world.

After all his glowing descriptions of our spiritual bodies, our spiritual senses, our surroundings and organizations hereafter, what are we to make of his assertion that there is neither space nor time in the spiritual world?

Space with us is the very basis of our identity, and of the differentiation of one thing from another. Impenetrability, or the power of a body to occupy a certain portion of space to the exclusion of all others, is the fundamental physical property, without which nothing could exist. Nor can we imagine how events can succeed each other in regular order without originating the idea of time.

It is true that our thought and imagination leap

over spaces and times without difficulty. Our heart is where our home is, though it be far away. The case of the young lady who at a London ball clasped her hands to her bosom in fearful agony at the very moment her lover was shot through the heart in Spain, and many similar cases, prove that sympathetic spirits are not really sundered, although their bodies may be, by the spaces of the material world.

It is true also that we make a certain mental estimate of time, whether it be long or short, according to our mental states—an estimate not at all concurred in by our neighbor who gets his information from the time-piece or the movement of the sun. And lastly, in our dreams, when the soul works in partial independence of the body, what a magnificent scorn she exhibits of the bondage of time and space and even of death itself!

These are faint foreshadowings of the spiritual laws revealed through Swedenborg.

Times and spaces are fixities in this life; they are *appearances* in the next.

What are appearances?

They are objects or events or motions or times or spaces which represent the changing states of the soul as to wisdom and love. They appear or

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disappear with these mental states, changing as they change.

Time and space are no exceptions to the law of spiritual creation that the objective world is produced by and represents the subjective. A spirit's body changes, his clothing changes, his house changes, his scenery changes, according to the changes of his mental state. Variations in time and space are with him the external signs and proofs of variations in his emotional and intellectual condition. They are modes of his own existence.

It is day or night to the spirit, cold or warm, summer or winter, not according to the relationships existing between a rotating earth and a central sun, but according to the state of the soul or frame of the mind, and a greater or less receptivity of the love and wisdom which are the heat and light of the spiritual world. That love and wisdom enter the mind by an interior way, and are made apparent to the perceptive faculties as heat or light in the external sphere.

So also objects are near or far off in that world, not on account of fixed spatial distances, but through the operation of the law of affinity which

draws similar things together and drives dissimilar ones apart.

Swedenborg's statement, then, that there are no times and spaces in the spiritual world, is qualified by the statement, that they are not fixed times and spaces, such as we have here, but apparent times and spaces wholly different in origin and in signification from ours.

Time and space come with a finite creation. The moment souls are created, finited, placed apart from God and exist, time and space spring up about them. Why? Because they are finite. If any one of them were infinite, he would be God, without time and space. Man is finite; he feels limitations. He reaches forward; he collides with another finite. He looks abroad; he is met by the horizon.

The horizon has a deep significance. It is the badge, the type, the proof of our finiteness. It contracts or expands indefinitely according to our spiritual states. We can never get out of it. It is the periphery of our universe. There is no horizon, however, to the eye of God.

The fact that there are times and spaces in this world and apparent times and spaces in the next, is evidence of our finiteness, is proof that we are

separated or discreted from God. He has no time, no space, no limitations, no progressions from one place to another, from one age to another, from one state of thought and affection to another, from one life to another.

His infinite love and wisdom, being above times and spaces and phenomena, have an infinite projection or extension. He therefore pervades every sphere without a horizon in any. He is therefore omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent.

The universe exists only by reason of its imperfection. It may grow more and more perfect for ever, but the absolutely perfect is unattainable, because it is the divine.

Now contemplate the two most profound and comprehensive laws of the spiritual world.

1st. The imperfect reception of the divine love in the will of the angels, and the infinite varieties of that reception, are the causes of all spatial appearances with their objects and phenomena.

2d. The imperfect reception of the divine wisdom in the understanding of the angels is the cause of the appearance of time and its succession.

These laws are evident; for if any soul were *perfect* in its reception of the divine love it would

enter into or assume all the creative energies of God, and could pervade all epochs. If it were *perfect* in the reception of the divine wisdom, it would see the past, the present and the future as one.

Our imperfection is the pledge of our immortality, our progress, our happiness, as well as the ground of our consciousness itself.

The poet understood all this, who said :

“Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?”

There is spiritual as well as physical impenetrability. It is our individuality, our identity. Each soul is a substance with specific qualities peculiarly its own, not to be displaced by any other soul or transmuted into it. Therefore it produces times and spaces peculiar to itself.

All things differ. No two trees are alike; no two leaves on a tree. No forms are ever precisely similar; no two thoughts; no two affections; no two human faces; no two spirits. Hence the infinity of the spiritual and natural universes, and the boundlessness of times and spaces both here and hereafter.

As all things differ, every state of affection and

thought must have points of divergence from all other states, giving birth to some surroundings peculiar to itself. Therefore separations take place. Each thing has an individual sphere; each standpoint a different horizon. One thing stands apart from another in space; one thing succeeds another in time.

On earth and in heaven the appearances are the same. Similar impressions of time and space are made on the senses of man and angel, but the interpretation is different. This arises from the difference between natural and spiritual thought. Spiritual thought looks directly into the causes of things. It sees the origin of spiritual times and spaces, and sees that it is mental. The angel, therefore, is not surprised at the annihilation of his space, at the shortening or lengthening of his time, events which on our earth would be incredibly miraculous.

He thinks intently from love of some friend in the remotest spiritual society, and space is nothing; and he stands face to face with his friend. He has entered into a similar state of affection and thought, and therefore projects similar things around him. Nor is he astonished if any one vanishes instantly from his sight. He knows that he

has simply passed into a different frame of mind. So of time. The sun may be shining in noon-day brilliance, but if the spirit sinks into a selfish or worldly state of thought, it will grow immediately dark and the sun will disappear. States shorten or lengthen the days.

From this point of view we may understand that strange passage of Scripture, in which it is asserted that Joshua made the sun stand still in the midst of heaven, so that it hastened not to go down for a whole day. The skeptic mocks at this statement, and the Christian doubts it or is sorely puzzled to explain it. No one in this scientific age dares suppose that either the earth or the sun could stand still for a moment without precipitating the globe to destruction. The commentators have no refuge but to say with some, that it is "a sublime poetical trope;" or, with others, that God caused a great refraction of light in the sky long after the sun had gone down, enabling the Israelites to pursue their enemies—which, of course, is a paltry subterfuge.

All persons and events in the Jewish history represented spiritual things, the mysteries of heaven, the operation of God on the heart. In this fact lies the divinity of the Old Testament. The miracles

are simply spiritual events interpreted in a natural manner. The sun shines in heaven for a longer or shorter period according to the states of the individual angel. To have the sun stand still until one slays his enemies, is, in spiritual language, to have the divine support and countenance in overcoming our evils, so long as we continue the warfare against them in his name.

The Jews were, no doubt, assisted by a miraculous light, but it came from within and not from without; from the spiritual Sun, not from the natural. The light that smote Paul on his way to Damascus did not flash from our terrestrial sky. Yet the phenomena in these cases were interpreted sensuously by Paul and Joshua; and the natural inference is, that they occurred in the physical sphere. This is one of the many instances where the letter killeth, and the spirit maketh alive.

Let us return to spiritual spaces.

When an angel sees another spirit close by, he knows that that spirit has something in common with himself, has entered into a state of life, thought and feeling similar to his own. When he sees spirits afar off unable to approach, he knows that no physical obstacles intervene, but that their dissimilar spiritual states keep them asunder.

Thus it was that the rich man saw Lazarus "afar off," in Abraham's bosom—that is, in a state of love to God and the neighbor incomprehensible to himself. This total difference of state is the "impassable gulf" which is fixed between heaven and hell—no material abyss, but a dissimilarity of mental states which produces entirely different worlds around them. Thus the angels and the devils are antipodal, standing feet to feet, each utterly and for ever beyond the horizon of the other, because their states of thought and feeling are fundamentally and eternally opposite.

Persons or societies in the spiritual world are more or less remote from each other according to the dissimilarity of their mental states. They approach or recede as these states vary and become more or less sympathetic. Husband and wife, being thoroughly united in spirit, occupy the same house and the same chamber. The spirit next resident to yourself will be the one more thoroughly congenial, and so on in all directions from yourself as a centre.

Swedenborg says :

"It has been permitted me to see how similitude of state conjoins, and thereby contracts the extension of space or distance, and how dissimilitude



separates and produces an extension of space or distance. They whom the sight would judge to be a mile distant from each other, can be present in a moment when the love of one toward another is excited; and on the contrary, they who are conversing together can in a moment be removed a mile apart when enmity is excited."

In passing from one extreme state to another, from intense joy to intense grief, from great light to utter darkness, from faith to incredulity, from love to hatred, and so forth, the soul travels through a great many intermediate states, which, if they were all registered and presented to outward view, would almost give one a panorama of the spiritual universe.

How do they move about or travel in the spiritual world?

To advance from one person to another, from one society to another, from one kingdom or heaven to another, interior changes of state must occur in the mind, which changes are accompanied by corresponding progressions of the spiritual body in the apparent space of the spiritual world.

It is therefore possible for the spirit to remain in the same place in fact, and, by successive changes of state induced upon his affections and thoughts

by spirits approaching one after another, to travel in appearance from place to place, from society to society, from heaven to heaven.

This organic law of the spirit renders credible the statement that Swedenborg was granted a survey of all parts of the spiritual world while still living in his natural body. His soul did not leave his body. His natural senses became quiescent; his natural mode of thought became dormant. His spiritual perceptions were opened; he entered into the sphere or states of the spirits or angels who approached him; and he saw around him the scenery or events which represented outwardly their spiritual lives. By having different spirits successively adjoined to him, his apparent external surroundings were successively changed, and he thus obtained that vast accumulation of spiritual experiences which will instruct and delight the coming generations of men.

To illustrate most forcibly this great law, that spiritual scenery, with all its objects, times and spaces, rises spontaneously about the unmoving spirit in correspondence with his successive changes of affection and thought; and also to show how the natural and spiritual worlds are connected; the spirit of Swedenborg, still resident in his natural

body, was presented with a view of spirits from several planets of our solar system, and from worlds that revolve afar off in the sidereal abysses, and through them he saw the people and objects in those remote spheres.

Thus his little book, "Earths in the Universe," upon which the greatest ridicule has been heaped, and which is perhaps the most difficult fully to comprehend, is explained by, and in return itself illustrates the fundamental laws of our spiritual being.

In the spiritual world nothing ever separates us from those we love and by whom we are loved; for to think of one there intently from affection, is to bring him before our face. Affection is presence and thought is sight. God is, therefore, for ever shining as a sun before the faces of his children.

Another of the wonders of the spiritual life is that the sun is always in the east, and that the angels can never turn their backs upon it. Whichever way they turn their bodies the sun is always in front of them. This fact, apparently so strange, is only a part of the general law, that all objects which appear outwardly to spirits are representative of spiritual things within themselves. The sun without them represents the Lord as he is

received in their inmost hearts. Their affections, the interior faces of the spirit are perpetually turned toward the Lord, and therefore the representative sun appears perpetually before the face of the body. On the contrary the sun of the spiritual world is always at the back of evil spirits. They do not see it because they are interiorly turned away from the Lord.

Morning, noon and evening come and go, not according to the rising and setting of the sun, for the sun of the spiritual world appears always at a middle altitude between the horizon and the zenith; but in obedience to the mutations of the spirit itself in its reception of the divine love and wisdom. It is morning when the Lord rises freshly and sweetly upon the heart with his married beams of goodness and truth. The light which illumines the world, illumines also with living radiance of thought the soul that surveys it. The celestial love accompanying this morning light stirs warmly the most secret fountains of the emotional life. The morning hour of the angels is their state of sweetest peace, innocence, trust and joy.

Every morning in the spiritual world is a new birth and resurrection; a passing away of old

forms of thought and feeling and a flowering forth of a higher and better state. Every morning is a further revelation of the Lord, and a fresh coronation of love, fragrant with dews and flowers, as the guiding divinity of the soul.

The love of the Lord newly awakened into higher power stimulates the love of the neighbor, and the soul yearns to go forth, vigorous and joyful, into all the uses of life, social, civil and domestic. Then it passes on to its noon state, when the blended heat and light are greatest, and the spiritual activities are at their height. It pours out its life in genial labors.

But in the attempt to utilize the love and wisdom given it of God for the benefit of others, something of the selfhood creeps in, and the light begins to pale and the heat to decline, and the shadows of evening steal gradually over the soul. The morning and noon are long and brilliant according as the spirit can sustain its total surrender to God and the neighbor. As the soul turns partially away from the Lord to self, and approaches, though still remotely, those earthly states or modes of feeling and thought which we so well understand, a spiritual obscurity overshadows it, represented outwardly by all the phenomena of evening.

Thus it is that even the angels feel, like ourselves, the tender pensiveness of the twilight hour. The great sun seems to veil himself in a glory of amber clouds. The silver stars steal softly forth and light their humbler fires. Mysterious and beautiful shadows of heaven spread over the woods and waters. The echoes of purer loves and of nobler thoughts tremble on the air. And the golden depths of ether draw the soul into delicious reverie, with a beauty that saddens while it exalts, and with a divine intimation that the splendors of its morning hour are concealed but not lost.

But there is no night in heaven. That belongs only to the earth and to hell. For the angels never fall into states of thought and feeling so low, that they could forget or deny the Lord—never!

Lastly, they sleep.

Yes, they sleep and dream. They drop the activities of angelic life; they relax the high tensions of love and thought. They rest. They are blest with visions of transcendent beauty. Their dreams are the voices of higher angels talking above them on celestial themes. In the highest heaven it is the voice of Jehovah walking and speaking with his children in the paradise of the soul. In the deep slumber and unconsciousness of

their selfhood, they are thus secretly fed with new life from above. They are drawn back to the Lord. Then comes the heavenly dawn again with its glimmer of pearl and gold. The joy and peace of a new and more innocent childhood burst upon them. They sing praises which are prayers, and they turn toward each other with that love which is both praise and prayer. Then the sun opens his palace-gates of cloud, and, renovated by his warmth and light, they consecrate themselves to the duties and blessings of another day.

Swedenborg says that the angels advance in perfection by means of these successive and charming alternations of state. We are apt to suppose that the angelic life will be one continued, unabated blaze of glory, and a steady advance from height to height, with never a look cast downward or backward. Swedenborg's disclosure is far more rational and beautiful, and founded, moreover, in the nature of things.

For there is an eternal and universal alternation and revolution impressed on spirit and matter; an attraction and repulsion; a going and returning; a rising and setting; systole and diastole; inspiration and expiration; contraction and expansion; light

and shadow; heat and cold; day and night; sleeping and waking; summer and winter.

This eternal and universal alternation of states, the perpetual outflowing and indrawing of the breath of God, is the mighty force which keeps the orbs of heaven on their courses, turns the world on its axis, makes the ebb and flow of the tides, brings us June and December; causes the heart to beat and the lungs to breathe, excites and subdues the powers of the brain, impels us to labor and to rest, lifts us to heaven and permits us to recede to the earth.

Amid all the infinite variety of phenomena and the multiplicity of secondary causes, the one primary universal cause of all these things is, the tendency of the selfhood, on the one hand, to recede from the Lord, and the attractive power of the divine love, on the other, which would draw all things back to the infinite bosom.

This apparent resolution or disintegration of the one great cause into the many, was in the mind of the far-sighted poet when he sang:

"All things  
Are of one pattern made; bird, beast and flower,  
Song, picture, form, space, thought and character  
Deceive us, seeming to be many things,  
And are but one."



Swedenborg frequently states that it is the inability of the natural man to think above time and space, or, in other words, his bondage to sensuous appearances, which causes his mental darkness, and compels him to construe the Word of God in a literal manner, against which the educated reason must finally revolt.

The Word of God is an imperishable record of the states of the human heart and intellect in their relations to the Supreme Being. These states cannot be comprehended by the mind which rests in the contemplation of the times, places, numbers and persons mentioned in the Bible. Those times, places, numbers and persons are representative of spiritual states, and nothing but a knowledge of those states can lead us to a true perception of the spiritual things of the Lord's kingdom.

To prepare the way for the comprehension of the spiritual sense, which he was commissioned to unfold, Swedenborg reveals to us the laws and phenomena of the other life, enabling us, in a great measure, to think spiritually and above nature; involving, also, a positive philosophy of the human soul which must supersede the dreamy metaphysics of all the ancient and modern schools.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD IN HEAVEN.

**T**O be with Christ! to see the Lord! to diminish the sad distance which now seems to intervene between Him and our souls, is the highest, deepest, sweetest hope of the Christian heart.

Behold how this sacred hope is created and nourished by the melodious utterances of the Holy Word.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

“In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”

“Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.”

“Whom have I in heaven but Thee?”

“My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”

“My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ?”

Swedenborg, the herald of the New Jerusalem descending from heaven ; he who by divine authority has unsealed the Word of God and opened it to our spiritual perceptions ; he who has seen into the world of spirits, into heaven and hell and into the mechanism of the universe ; what does he report to our hungry and thirsty souls about this great mystery, the presence of the Lord in the world we are to inhabit hereafter ?

Strange are his utterances at the first inspection, and many a mind has turned away, no doubt, from his pearls of priceless wisdom and beauty, which it needed but a little patience and reflection to discover.

“The Lord is the all in all in heaven.”

“The Divine Sphere of the Lord constitutes heaven.”

“The Divine Sphere of the Lord in heaven is love to Him and charity to the neighbor.”

“The angels taken collectively are called Heaven, because they compose it.”

“In proportion as the angels receive goodness

and truth from the Lord, so far are they angels and so far are they heaven."

The angels *are* heaven! Heaven, then, is not a world or place created by the Lord out of nothing as a home for the angels? nor a place into which one may possibly be admitted as through the gates of a city? No! Heaven considered as an objective scene of supernal grandeur and beauty, is created instantaneously, from moment to moment, not only *for* the angels but *through* the angels. It is a cosmos representative of angelic states of thought and affection, springs up with them, changes with them, and would instantly vanish like a dream, if the angels could be withdrawn. On the other hand every soul added to heaven increases its glory and splendor and bliss, adds something organically to it which did not exist there until its arrival.

Now, notice particularly. It is the Lord *in* the angels which is heaven. Out of the angels, above the angels, He is infinite, invisible, incomprehensible. *In* and *through* the angels He creates heaven. The Lord is the all in all in heaven, not by the transfusion of his divine substance into the angels, but by his divine sphere. His divine sphere is not Himself, but an emanation of divine love and wisdom from Himself. It is this divine

sphere received by the angels which is called the Lord *in* the angels. There are different heavens and myriads of different societies with their infinitely different forms and surroundings, all produced by the different modes and degrees of receiving and manifesting the divine sphere which is the life of heaven.

The angel himself contributes nothing either in spirit or substance to the creation. His own body is a form organized out of spiritual substances, which are emanations from the divine substance. The life which animates it is not his own life, but a constantly inflowing force from the divine life. In Him we live, move and have our being. The spirit's individuality, his impenetrability, resides in his free agency, in his volition, in his power so to turn or modify his own spiritual forms one way or another, that the divine life flowing in shall create through and around him one kind of a world or another.

This is not pantheism. If the universe was God, He would create all its external forms in correspondence with his own infinite divine love and wisdom. There could be no evil, no hideous things moral or physical, no suffering, no disease, no death, no hell. The fact that such things exist

is proof that some great determining power intervenes between God and the universe. That power is the free agency, the selfhood of our spirits.

Again, nature is not God, any more than the emanations of a man's mind constitute the man. Take nature away, obliterate every organic form from the dew-drop to the sun, and God remains the same, infinite, indivisible, self-existing, sole-existing Spirit.

The love and wisdom emanating from the Supreme Being may then be so appropriated by the selfhood of his creatures as to be turned into hatred and folly. This is the origin of evil and of hell. The angel receives them in a different manner. By obedience to the divine law, he permits the divine love and wisdom to reign in him and to work through him. He knows that nothing is his own. His apparent goodness and truth are the Lord's love and wisdom, received, implanted and manifested in his life. In profound humility and self-renunciation he feels that he is not good; that he is not wise; that "there is none good but God."

The evil spirit claims everything as his own. He maintains that his evil is good and that his falsity is *truth*.

It is the presence of the Lord, therefore, through

reception and obedience, in the heart of the angels, which constitutes heaven; first the heavenly state or life, and next the heavenly place or objective world.

The sphere of the Lord which constitutes heaven in the hearts of the angels, is love. Heaven is love. Love to the Lord and love to the neighbor are the life of heaven, and there is no heaven without them. This life is attained by obedience to the divine commandments. What we call the commandments of God are simply the laws or modes of his own Divine existence, stated to us in legal forms for our spiritual guidance. To keep the commandments is to *live like God* in our finite sphere; hence *to be like Him*; hence, by spiritual affinity, *to love Him*; and, finally, by the great law of spiritual attraction, *to be with Him*.

“If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me.’

“The love of God, the fealty we owe him  
Implanted in our hearts and fruitful there,  
Will make our outward life a noble poem  
By making first the inner life a prayer.”

The whole Christian world has some idea of this presence of God in the human soul. It knows that

this is "the kingdom of God" which is said to be *within us*, and which comes without observation.

Augustine beautifully observes :

"Too late I sought Thee ; too late I found Thee. I sought Thee at a distance and did not know that Thou wert near. I sought Thee abroad in thy works ; and behold ! Thou wert within me !"

The Christian world, however, does not understand that this *God-in-the-heart* is heaven ; that love and charity are the whole of it ; that the entire spiritual world is created continuously out of it and through it ; that the degree and state of it in ourselves determine what heaven we shall go to ; what we shall see there and do there ; and the form under which the Divine Being shall manifest Himself to *us*.

Is there any other presence of the Lord in the spiritual world besides that which proceeds from the secret, inward appropriation of the divine love and wisdom, manifested spiritually as love and charity ?

Yes. Every internal presence must have its outward correspondential form, its external manifestation. The Lord, who is all-in-all in the angelic soul, is also, in some manner, the all-in-all of the angelic world. The whole universe around us

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hereafter will be a splendid theatre representing under symbolic forms the ineffable mysteries of the Lord's spiritual kingdom. We will then understand the words of the poet :

“The sun, the moon, the stars,  
The seas, the hills, the plains ;  
Are not all these, O soul !  
The Vision of Him who reigns ?”

There, however, we shall have the *key* to the vision, and we shall read, as in an ever-newly-created book, the sublime movements of the Providence within us.

The chemist and naturalist tell us that the vast coal-beds of the earth are condensations of the heat and light which prevailed in the primeval ages of the world. We will understand, hereafter, how all visible objects are condensations or concretions on different planes of being of the divine love and wisdom, which are the heat and light of the spiritual world.

Though God is seen representatively in everything surrounding the angels, He is pre-eminently present and manifest in the spiritual Sun. He is called the Sun of righteousness because he is the sun visible to the righteous. It is said that there is no need of the sun or of the moon in heaven, but

that the glory of God and the Lamb are the light of it. The glory of God is the divine love, which is received into the heart and projected outwardly, by the great law of spiritual creation, as a sun. The glory of God is, therefore, the cause of the spiritual sun, which, by its heat and light, is the great symbol and representative of the divine love and wisdom.

The spiritual sun, thus representing the Lord from whom it directly proceeds, appears to every one according to his power of receiving and reflecting the spiritual light and heat it communicates; high or low, near or remote, bright or dull, flaming with celestial gold, or resplendent with the silvery beams of the spiritual sphere. It appears always before the faces of the happy angels, who receive its warmth into their hearts, and its light into their minds. They never look toward it without thinking of the Lord, and its appearance to them is an ever-flaming revelation of the state of their own heart toward God.

Evil spirits, alas! have turned their backs upon it, for they have denied and forgotten the Lord, and it is a dull, lurid spot in their murky atmospheres.

Is there no personal manifestation of the Lord

to the angels, as that of man to man face to face?

Yes; ever since the Supreme Being assumed a human body and rose with its spiritual form into heaven, He has become the Divine Man, and frequently stands revealed in that Divine Humanity to the humble and loving children of his heavenly kingdom.

It is a law of the spiritual world that when a spirit fixes the heart and mind on any person with strong intent and aspiration, that person will appear in apparent space under a form determined by the state of the thinker himself. When therefore an angel in his hour of fervent prayer, draws near to his Maker in the serene strength and glow of faith and love, the Lord may appear outwardly before him, face to face, eye to eye, like man to man.

This God, who is the all-in-all of the heavens, is Jesus Christ. The "Father" of our theological speculations, is an abstraction which no man has ever seen or can see. The Son alone hath revealed Him. The Godhead, so far as it can be manifested to finite beings, exists in the Divine Humanity, known historically to the men of this earth as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Said He not of Himself?—

"I am Alpha and Omega: the beginning and the ending: which is, and which was, and which is to come: the Almighty."

It will be profitable for us to inquire into the great spiritual laws which govern these manifestations of the Divine Presence to both men and angels; for there is nothing in them accidental or arbitrary or miraculous in the common acceptation of that word. A true conception of this subject will give us a clear insight into some of the most remarkable things related in the letter of Scripture.

It is a great law that God can never appear to man or angel *as He really is*; but the appearance is determined and modified by the state of the person into whom He flows, and to whom he appears outwardly,—the external appearance being always a correspondence of the internal experience.

This explains the curious fact of the Lord's varying appearances to his disciples after his death. Mary, who was so intimate with Him, mistakes Him for the gardener and inquires after the Lord. Peter and John, speaking to Him in the broad daylight, do not know Him, until a miracle suggests his true character to them. Other disciples walk with Him and converse with Him on his own death and resurrection; but "their eyes are

holden" and they do not know Him. They recognize Him in the breaking of bread; and lo! He vanishes from their sight.

The same Divine Being has appeared to patriarchs, prophets and apostles under many different forms: frequently as an angel called "the angel of Jehovah;" as a man wrestling all night with Jacob; as a man standing with a drawn sword before Joshua; even as three men appearing to Abraham; as a human being dying a shameful death upon the cross; as a risen body showing to an unbelieving soul the print of the nails and the mark of the spear; as a dazzling splendor on the mount conversing with Moses and Elias; as a form of light ascending to heaven; as a flaming angel standing in the sun; as "the Ancient of days" seated upon a sapphire throne with "the appearance of fire" round about Him.

God is unchangeable, infinite in form and perfections. These varying manifestations are the records and expressions of varying states of reception in the finite soul of man and the finite Church. God is finited in appearance, whenever his Spirit enters into the perceptive faculties of his finite creatures. All men and angels might thus see God at the same moment of time throughout the entire uni-

verse, and no two of them could have precisely the same revelation.

To see God therefore is no such wonderful and impossible thing as a sensuous mode of thought interprets it to be. It is simply to have an external or symbolic representation of the state of your own soul as to its reception of the divine love and wisdom.

Before the Lord assumed a human form by the process of birth and growth in this world, He had no spiritual body of his own by which He could appear to the angels. "The Angel of Jehovah" who spoke in the first person as if he was the Lord himself, was always some angel, whose consciousness and selfhood were laid entirely asleep while the Divine Spirit spake through him. When the angel returned to his own state, he had no recollection of what had transpired or of anything he had said.

Swedenborg says of this manifestation *through* angels, not *from* them :

"In order that man may be spoken to by vocal expressions, which are articulate sounds in the ultimates of nature, the Lord uses the ministry of angels by filling them with the Divine Spirit, and by laying asleep what is of their own selfhood, so

that they think they are Jehovah while speaking. Thus the divine of Jehovah, which is supreme, descends into the lowest spheres of nature in which man sees and hears. Hence it may appear how the angels spake by the prophets, viz., that the Lord himself spake, although by angels, and that the angels did not speak at all of themselves."

This possession of one spirit by another so that the latter thinks, speaks, acts, or writes at the dictation of the former, without the least intervention of his own individuality and without his subsequent remembrance of what had occurred, has been frequently and abundantly confirmed and illustrated by the strange psychological phenomena which have excited so much credulity and incredulity during the present century.

The appearance of Jehovah to Abraham under the form of three men can thus be made credible. Jehovah can take spiritual possession of a man in the flesh as easily as of a spirit. In modern times it might be called mesmeric possession. Three strangers or travelers passing through the country may have been used as mediums or ministers. They are brought to Abraham, who perceived by interior illumination that they represent the Divin-

ity. He speaks of them and prays to them as if they were one person. They deliver the message of God and go on their way, utterly ignorant, when they come to themselves, of the whole transaction.

A similar phenomenon took place when two angels or messengers, evidently two men (for the people of Sodom saw them also), visited Lot and saved him and his family from the fearful destruction which fell upon the cities of the plain. So also a *man* wrestled with Jacob all night so that he received a permanent muscular deformity, and Jacob exclaimed in the morning, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

This theory that the persons who appeared to Abraham, Lot and Jacob were really *men* in the flesh, representing *per force* the Divine character, although not distinctly announced by Swedenborg, is fully accordant with his philosophy. Most of the cases of spiritual vision recorded in the Bible were of course openings of the spiritual sight; but in these cases there seems to have been no opening of the spiritual sight, and all the phenomena prove them to have really taken place in the natural world.

These appearances on earth were as strictly sym-



bolical or representative of spiritual things as all appearances in the spiritual world are. Why did Abraham see three men as one God? Because Abraham at that time represented the childhood of the church, or of the Lord in the church, when it is particularly under the care of the celestial angels, and before Isaac (representing the rational principle) was born. So long as men think sensuously, or in accordance with the reports of the senses, and do not correct their first impressions by rational analysis, the divine trinity of Love, Wisdom and Use, known also as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is presented to their perceptive faculties as three distinct persons; while their higher intuitions speak loudly for the essential unity of the Godhead.

The mass of the Christian world has not yet developed beyond this stage of sensuous interpretation. The cultivation of the rational and scientific elements of thought will lead it to higher ground and enable it to substitute real for apparent truths.

Why did God appear under a dual and not a triune human form to Lot? In correspondence with the things represented, which were those relating to judgment, involving the salvation of the faithful and the damnation of the wicked. The

Divine Love or Father, the essential Divine, as Swedenborg calls it, never judges. Therefore he is left out.

“The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son.”

“I will send the Comforter to you, and when He is come He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.”

When we refer to the sublime and mysterious representations of God, which were made visible to the prophet Ezekiel and to the Apostle John, representations which were seen in the open heavens, enough has been said to prove the organic spiritual law, that God appears to every one according to his state, and that the capabilities of the state, intellectual and moral, determine the form and manner in which the Divine Being shall be made objective to him.

The same law, with its special limitations, has always prevailed and will prevail for ever. It is just as credible that Swedenborg saw and conversed with God, as it is that Abraham or Moses or Paul did so. It is an occurrence which is possible to all men and which happens very frequently in the spiritual world. There is nothing miraculous about it. God is always speaking to us; in nature, in

his Word, in his providence, in our own souls; and inwardly through spirits and angels. The wonder is, not that God speaks to us, but that we, poor ignorant creatures, refuse to believe it and will not hear him.

We have no statement from Swedenborg himself either printed or written of the *first* manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ to his mental vision. There is a story handed down by tradition, and which contains nothing improbable, that while eating heartily at dinner, his spiritual eyes were opened for a moment or so, during which he saw his floor covered with serpents and toads, representative of the gross evils of gluttony, and a man in the corner of the room who said to him, "Eat not so much."

The next night, the same man appeared to him, this time, as Dr. Beyer professes to have received from the mouth of Swedenborg, "sitting in purple and majestic splendor near his bed." This man or angel or spirit, or the Lord himself shorn of his glory and veiled in accommodation to the state of the new seer, gave him a commission to open the spiritual sense of the Word of God.

"I have been called," says Swedenborg, in a letter to Dr. Hartley, dated 1769, "to a holy office by the Lord himself, who has most graciously mani-

fested himself in person to me, his servant, in the year 1743; when he opened my sight to the view of the spiritual world, and granted me the privilege of conversing with spirits and angels, which I enjoy to this day."

In the other life it is spiritual affinity, nearness, likeness, sympathy which determine presence. The Lord is *omnipresent*, but He is most nearly and distinctly and sweetly present to those who love Him most and thence know Him best.

The angels who understand intuitively the relation between the subjective and objective in the other life, and who see in everything some manifestation of the Divine, do not mistake the appearance of the Lord in their apparent spaces and times for a form possessing any fixedness or real externity. They know it to be a heavenly vision, varying in power, beauty and glory according to their own interior states.

The following elucidative paragraph from Swedenborg is very interesting:

"When the Lord appears in heaven, which often occurs, He does not appear clothed with the sun, but in an angelic form, distinguished from the angels by the Divine which is translucent in his face. For the Lord is not there in person, be-

cause in person He is always encompassed with the sun ; but He is present there by aspect. It is common in heaven for persons to appear as present in the place where the view is fixed or terminated, although it is very far from the place where they actually are. This presence is called the presence of the internal sight, of which I shall speak hereafter. I have also seen the Lord out of the sun and a little beneath in an angelic form ; and also near to me, in a similar form with a resplendent countenance ; and once as a flaming or burning light in the midst of the angels."

This last manifestation reminds us of the mystical splendors of the sublime vision of Ezekiel :

"Then I beheld, and lo ! a likeness as the appearance of fire : from the appearance of his loins, even downward, fire ; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber."

In No. 40 of *Earths in the Universe*, is a remarkable account of a personal manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ to certain spirits as a Divine Man standing in the sun of the spiritual world. It is there stated also that several spirits who had been men upon earth in the lifetime of Jesus, and who had seen and known him, declared before the

whole company that the person appearing in the sun was the identical God-Man, Jesus Christ, whom they had known on earth.

The last means or medium by which the Lord is present in the spiritual world is through his written Word. This is astonishing to those who do not believe in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and to those also who suppose them to be nothing but a literal message from God to man like the written or printed laws by which a king may govern his subjects.

Swedenborg asserts that the Word is absolutely divine; that it is not only the crown of revelation, but "the plenitude of God." Its inmost is the Divine Truth or the Divine Mind itself.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

This conception of the true nature of the Bible, vastly exceeds any thought of its inspiration or holiness ever before promulgated. In its inmost it is God himself; absolute divine truth, incommunicable to finite creatures. It descended through the minds of the celestial angels and was presented outwardly to them by special dictation as a grand

system of celestial truth. Flowing thence through the spiritual heavens, it was dictated in a form of spiritual truth. Descending still lower into the natural degree, it took on a natural and literal form, apparently imperfect, feeble, obscure, accommodated to the feeblest and obscurest states of the human understanding.

Now all these senses, utterly different in external appearance as they are—the divine, the celestial, the spiritual, the natural—are absolutely one. They coexist, cohere and connect by correspondent forms in all the spheres of creation. When man upon earth reads a verse in the letter humbly and believingly, spiritual angels instantly perceive it in the spiritual sense, celestial angels in the celestial sense, the Lord hears and feels it, and the Divine Truth runs the whole scale of thought from centre to circumference. Thus we are consociated with angels and conjoined to the Lord by means of his Word.

The Word, written by angels from direct divine dictation, is preserved in every heavenly society with great care, and is approached with profound reverence. It is the source of all their wisdom and power. The public worship is from the Word, and the minister does not explain its meaning from

his self-derived intelligence, but from interior illumination, so that he can discover and draw forth truths which were not visible from an exterior standpoint. The Word is appealed to in all cases of doubt or difficulty; for the Law of the Lord reigns supreme in heaven. The Word there answers all the questions of the earnestly-seeking soul, as the precious stones on the breast-plate of the high-priest responded to his prayers by beautiful variations of their light.

These copies of the Word shine in heaven with a great light, varying in color, power and beauty with the states of the particular society. They illumine the temples where they are kept, and even the faces of the angels who assemble to hear, as the face of Moses was brightened by gazing on the tablets containing the decalogue. The sphere of the Word, which is in reality that of God himself, cannot be safely approached by those who are in contrary or unloving and unbelieving states. Swedenborg saw this attempted by unprepared spirits, but they were hurled senseless to the ground with phenomena resembling thunder and lightning. This explained to him the miraculous power which emanated from the ark of the covenant, prostrating the statues of heathen gods before it,



and instantly destroying those who touched it profanely or even innocently. The ark of the covenant represented the Word in the heavens; and what seemed a miracle from the earthly standpoint, was the orderly operation of a spiritual law.

It gives great offence, without any rational foundation, to the leaders in orthodox communions, that Swedenborg should assert that the Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles and several minor books in the Old Testament, are not of equal value with the rest of the Scriptures. Some of them even intimate that Swedenborg found it convenient, in defence of his new theology, to expunge from the canon those portions which militate most against it. How utterly unfounded such a charge is, will be apparent on the slightest examination of the facts.

The separate books of which the Bible is composed were written in different ages and places and by different persons. They were not collected into one volume until several hundred years after Christ. The task of separating the true Word of God from the mass of spurious or apocryphal literature which had gathered around it was undertaken by councils of bishops, or left to individual churches. There was no great guiding light or principle. The de-

cision was reached through fancy or prejudice, upon meagre facts and unsatisfactory data. It was frequently made by vote!

The consequence was, that apocryphal books were read in many churches for several centuries, and that the grandest of all the Sacred Books, the Revelation, was for a long time rejected by the highest authorities. A still greater evil resulted, viz., that the whole theory of inspiration was made to rest upon tradition and authority, and the Church bound down to literal interpretations, so that it has never had any worthy conception of what the divinity of the Word is.

Swedenborg comes with a key to the biblical mysteries; a key which he did not invent, but which was given to him. We apply this key to five-sixths of the books bound up as the Word of God, and we find it to draw from them spiritual truths full of wisdom and beauty. We find also that it has no more application to the remaining books than it has to the orations of Cicero. They have no spiritual sense and no human ingenuity can put one into them. The difference between the genuine Word of God and the pious works which have been mistakenly bound up with it, is fundamental, organic and eternal; a difference easily dis-

covered by those who will give the matter a patient and candid investigation.

The apostolic writings, however, are of great theological value. They have subserved an important use in the first Christian Church, and will ever be referred to under the New Dispensation, as only of less importance than the veritable Word of God. Swedenborg's estimate of their character is thus given :

“In regard to the writings of Paul and the other apostles, I have not given them a place in the *Arca-na Cœlestia*, because they are dogmatic writings merely, and not written in the style of the Word, as are those of the Prophets, of David, of the Evangelists and the Revelation of St. John. The style of the Word consists throughout in *correspondences*, and thence effects an immediate communication with heaven ; but the style of these dogmatic writings is quite different, having indeed communication with heaven, but only mediately or indirectly.”

“The reason why the apostles wrote in this style was, that the new Christian Church had to make its beginning through them ; consequently the style used in the Word would not have been proper for such doctrinal tenets, which required plain and

simple language suited to the capacities of all readers. Nevertheless the writings of the apostles are very good books for the Church, as they insist on the doctrine of charity and faith thence derived as strongly as the Lord himself has done in the gospels and in the Revelation of St. John."

Reviewing this whole question of the presence of the Lord in heaven and in the human heart, and the spiritual laws by which revelation is effected, and especially the true nature of the Divine Word, it becomes clear to the mind, how an unfolding, by divine commission and special illumination, of the spiritual sense of that Word, is a veritable Second Coming of the Lord. This is the means whereby the New Jerusalem, a compact body or system of spiritual truth leading to an angelic life upon earth, is "descending from God out of heaven."

How long will the professed church of Christ fail to recognize this stupendous blessing, of which Swedenborg has been only the passive medium? How long will it grope in the darkness of naturalism, adhering to the falsities of the past, and fail to discover the great light which is already streaming from the open heavens, and which will illuminate, in the Lord's time, even the darkest corners of the earth?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE OCCUPATIONS OF HEAVEN.

HOW are we engaged hereafter? Dr. Chalmers, in an admirable discourse on "the new heaven and the new earth," exposes with a masterly hand the metaphysical delusions which exist in his own and all other evangelical denominations on the *immateriality* of the life to come.

He characterizes as "an imagination to be rectified, the product perhaps of a wrong but fashionable philosophy," the prevalent idea, "that when a spiritualizing process has purged away all our corruption, then by the stepping-stone of death and resurrection, we should be borne away to some ethereal region, where sense and body and all in the shape either of audible sound or of tangible substance are unknown."

"The common imagination," says he, making a most humiliating confession, "that we have of paradise on the other side of death, is that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether

or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing ; where all the warm and sensible accompaniments, which give such an expression of strength and life and coloring to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is meagre and imperceptible and uninviting to the eye of mortals here below—where every vestige of materialism is done away.”

Such is a picture of the Christian heaven drawn by a most learned and devout Christian minister ! Contrast it with the true idea of heaven which even children, untutored by catechisms, glean intuitively from the express declarations of Scripture, the appearance of angels, and the recorded visions of prophets and apostles. Do not the simple-minded laity, also, unblinded by metaphysical sophistries, think of heaven as the children do, as a world of superlative grandeur and beauty, full of visible and audible and tangible realities, and inhabited by glorious beings in the human form, living in splendid mansions and clad in radiant garments, displaying, also, the tender sympathies of human love and all the noble activities of the human intellect ?

“The holders of this imagination,” continues Dr. Chalmers, in a deprecating manner, “forget all the

while that there is no essential connection between materialism and sin—that the world which we now inhabit had all the amplitude and solidity of its present materialism before sin entered into it.”

“Were our place of everlasting blessedness,” he argues, “so purely spiritual as it is commonly imagined, then the soul of man, after having quitted his body at death, would quit it conclusively. Why should the disengaged spirit again be fastened to the drag of that grosser and heavier substance, which many think has only the effect of weighing down its activity? What is the use of a resurrection, if the union that then takes place, is to deaden or to reduce all those energies which are ascribed to the living principle in a state of separation?”

Surely the writer of this would have risen to clearer and nobler views of the soul, the resurrection and the life to come, had he studied the philosophy of Swedenborg, which solves all his difficulties at once by teaching that the spiritual body and the world it lives in, are neither material nor immaterial, but substantial!

His strongest argument for the solidity or reality of the spiritual life, in opposition to the absurd immaterialism which is everywhere taught, is drawn

from the fact that God manifested Himself in the flesh, assumed, purified and glorified a human body, and ascended to heaven with it where He reigns for ever in it.

"Does this look," he continues, "like the abolition of materialism after the present system of it is destroyed? Or does it not rather prove, that, transplanted into another system, it will be preferred to celestial honors, and prolonged in immortality throughout all ages?"

Had he understood how *material* and *substantial* things exist simultaneously in discrete degrees or planes of being, and undergo corresponding evolutions for ever, he would have escaped all this blundering in the dark, this confused and vague speculation, this annihilation of the physical world and this impossible transfusion of matter into spirit!

"Though a paradise of sense," he says in professional qualification of his statements, "it will not be a paradise of sensuality. Though not so unlike the present world as many apprehend, there will be one point of total dissimilarity betwixt them. It is not the entire substitution of spirit for matter that will distinguish the future economy from the present. But it will be the entire substitution of

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•righteousness for sin. It is this which signalizes the Christian from the Mohammedan paradise. Not that sense and substance and splendid imagery, and the glories of a visible creation seen with bodily eyes are excluded from it, but that all which is vile in principle and voluptuous in impurity will be utterly excluded from it. There will be a firm earth as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it, as we have at present; and it is not by the absence of these things, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterized."

The speculations of this great evangelical thinker, though far below the standard of New Church truth, and showing rather a brave search and struggle for light than the light itself, are cordially commended to those persons, who are afraid to think independently on those sublime themes, or even to think of them at all. They may infer from these views that it is unscriptural, unphilosophical and absurd, to speak or even think of heaven as a vague and felicitous state of the soul floating away in immaterial ethers. And that, on the contrary, it is highly rational and biblical to describe it as a genuine and beautiful world, full of glorious and saintly people, living in the constant exercise of

all the activities, and in the enjoyment of all the pleasures of which the soul and body of man are capable.

The scientific element predominates so largely in our modern culture, and the current theology is so utterly divorced from science, that in the minds of most men the spiritual and natural worlds stand far apart, without the least necessary or philosophical connection. The result is a deep-rooted naturalism both in and out of the church, so that the intellect is actually offended at the idea of open communication with heaven, as if it were something absurd or impossible.

Swedenborg teaches us the difference and the analogy between substance and matter, between the spiritual and natural worlds, and satisfies our rational faculty as to their corresponding laws and phenomena. This he has done under special and constant illumination from divine sources, surrounded by every safeguard to protect him from error or imposition. The Bible will hereafter be a sealed book only to those who refuse to examine the spiritual light revealed in its pages by its Divine Author through his chosen medium. To them, indeed, death will remain a dark shadow, and heaven a vague splendor, an imaginary state,

a celestial hope, a pious dream ; and the whole life to come a mystery, before which the uninstructed mind sinks down in helplessness or total apathy.

We have seen in the previous chapters that heaven is, first, a state of love and charity in the heart ; secondly, and flowing from the first, a state of wisdom and illumination in the mind ; and thirdly, as an effect of these emotional and intellectual states, a vast world of beauty and glory, making precisely the same kind of impression upon our spiritual senses that the natural world makes upon our natural senses.

Heaven begins at the centre, in a state of love and charity in the heart. That is the essential basis of its existence, the primal cause of its creation. No physical changes, no variations of place, no possible yearnings or prayers can bring a soul into heaven. No learning, no wisdom, no spiritual illumination, no faith, no operations of the understanding, can of themselves advance the spirit one step nearer to the pearl-white gates and mansions of the blessed. Love to God in the heart, charity to the neighbor, obedience to the divine laws, a life according to the commandments, however acquired, under whatever names or forms or creeds ; these are the passports to heaven, for these

are the powers which create it and animate it and sustain it from one moment to another.

The material of heaven is, therefore, a numberless multitude of souls, each one of whom is perfectly submissive to the divine will, and loves his neighbor better than himself. Each one is ready and eager to give, not only much but all he has for the benefit of others, and to devote his labors and consecrate his life to the common good. This lofty ideal is attained by a good life on earth, and by the judgment after death, when the good and evil elements in the character are separated, the evil cast out or made thoroughly dormant, and the good made the ruling loves and guiding principles of the future life.

Souls, such as we have described the angels to be, live in society with each other. Men, as we see them here on earth, are gregarious, like animals; but angels are consociative; that is, they are drawn together by spiritual affinities, and they are arranged or organized into societies, series, orders and degrees, according to the special functions they can discharge. The organizing power is not the selfhood of the spirit, nor the rule of the strongest, nor a transmuted authority, nor the will of a majority. The organizing power is the love and

wisdom of God, flowing through authentic and recognized channels, felt in every heart, clearly comprehended in every mind. There is no possible collision of interests or powers or forces, because all these have been surrendered to God. He assigns every angel his post and office, just as He keeps every star in its place throughout the shining abysses of the natural sphere.

The type upon which all the heavenly organizations are effected is the Human Form, that transcendent epitome of all the principles, forms and powers of the universe, that image and likeness of God. Each society is constituted and each heaven is consolidated on the principle of the human body, in which every organ and every cell and unit of an organ, lives and works for the benefit of all the rest, and takes nothing from the common fund but what is required to keep it in healthful, working condition. The life and joy of the soul are in the work and in the use or the good of it.

Societies and individuals have their places, associations, powers, forms and objective surroundings according to the uses or functions they love to perform. They differ widely in all these respects, but such is the divine order which prevails in heaven, that all the infinite parts work harmo-

niously together to the common end; and such is the perfection, peace and fitness of the whole, that the heavens appear in the sight of the Lord as one man, and each individual is a perfect miniature of the whole.

This pure or unlimited and spiritual anatomy, this transcendental physiology, this universal philosophy of form, which redeems psychology from its abstractions and makes the universe a concrete, living cosmos, or organism of beauty, although first definitely stated by Swedenborg, has been dimly foreseen by other great thinkers.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, gives this heavenly principle of organization the following expression:

“Now there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operation, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (or for definite uses).

After specifying some ten of the different functions of the Spirit in different individuals, he continues:

“But all these worketh that one and the self-

same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."

We shall understand more clearly what the occupations of these heavenly spirits are, if we first remove from our mind's eye, as calculated to obscure our perceptions, all those present and earthly engagements, which, by the very constitution of the spiritual world as unfolded by Swedenborg, are unnecessary or impossible in the future life.

The natural world is the sphere of birth and of death. In the spiritual world nothing is born and nothing dies. The natural world is fixed in time and space, not responding or responding very slowly to the spiritual changes of the soul. The spiritual world on the contrary is instantaneously plastic to the motions of the soul, of which its times, spaces and all its objective phenomena are strictly representative. From this philosophical basis there springs up at once a vast difference

between the occupations of the inhabitants of the respective spheres.

Abstract from the business of our world all the arts and trades and labors which are concerned in the feeding, clothing, housing and governing of mankind, what would be left? No seasons, no crops, no farming; no hunting, no fishing; no transportation of commodities, no bargain and sale; no wages, no property, no money or other representative of value; no manufactures, no house-building, no planting, no quarrying; no birth, no diseases, no death; no governments like ours, no elections, no taxes; no criminal jurisprudence; no wars, no treaties, no parties in Church or State. Take all these things and many others away from our conception of active life, and at first blush what an enormous vacuum is left! It seems to us as if all was taken away, all motives to action; yea, the very basis of affection and thought.

Now all these occupations, with the feelings, ideas and motives which they involve and engender, are peculiar to the natural world, to a realm of time and space in which fixed things are created, born, grow and die. They are necessary to this our first stage of existence, and are the very means of our rational development and of our



preparation for the higher life. Their use, however, is only temporary, and they obscure our perceptions of spiritual things, and hide from us the riches and glory of our future inheritance. Our life here is a fore-gleam of immortality. This world is the seed-field of elements which are to bear flower and fruit in heaven.

These things do not exist in the spiritual world, because the operation of the law of creation there differs from its operation here, that being a world of spiritual substances and not one of inert matter. Spiritual substances are emanations or concretions from a divine substance, and take form and coloring from the operations of the Divine Mind, and from those of the finite minds which He creates. Our spiritual bodies, the garments they wear, the houses they live in, the objects which surround them, are all "made without hands." As Swedenborg expresses it, they are all given freely by the Lord. Food, clothing, shelter, are no longer objects of painful solicitude. In our Father's house are "many mansions" prepared for us by Himself. We are fed with "angels' food," a spontaneous creation like the manna of the wilderness. We find ourselves daily clothed in correspondence with our interior states, like the lilies of the field which

neither toil nor spin. The golden city "garnished with all manner of precious stones," and the river of life "clear as crystal," rise ever before us as in a ravishing and perpetual dream.

"O sweet and blessed country !  
 The home of God's elect ;  
 O sweet and blessed country !  
 That eager hearts expect.  
 O fields that know no sorrow !  
 O state that fears no strife !  
 O princely bowers ! O land of flowers !  
 O realm and home of Life !"

We can now see that the occupations of the other life are *spiritual* in their character. They all have reference to the growth and illumination of the mind, to the purification of the affections, and to the sanctification of the will and the conduct of the life on principles of love to the Lord and charity to the neighbor. To grow in wisdom, intelligence, goodness and usefulness for ever, is the life and felicity of heaven.

When we say that the occupations of the heavenly life are spiritual in their character, we are far from meaning that heaven is an infinite Church, and our life there a perpetual sabbath in the ordinary sense of these words. Take up any orthodox

work on the subject, and you will find that holiness, self-renunciation, faith, love, praise and prayer are considered as the elements and business of the heavenly life. This is a great mistake. These are only elements of the heavenly *character* which prepare one for the heavenly life. The heavenly life is one of constant spiritual activity, in which every intellectual faculty of the mind and every exalted affection of the heart is called into blissful operation.

The religious instinct of course exists in heaven in the highest degree; but it is not the whole of heavenly life as is commonly supposed. There are private and public devotions, and the spirit in its exercises of praise and prayer rises to an ecstasy of faith and love, of which we have here no conception. The public worship is conducted by singing, praying and expounding the Word of God, and the Church militant on earth receives its best inspiration from the Church triumphant in heaven. Religious offices perform there the same use they are designed to fill here; they bring us into closer communion with the Divine Love, and renew the soul with heavenly strength and peace, only to fit us more thoroughly for the consociations of life and the discharge of all our social and domestic duties.

The happiness of heaven depends on its neighborly activities, and not on its holiness or its prayers or its praises, although the former cannot exist without the latter. The joy of heaven is in use. No genuine or permanent felicity can flow from abstract states of the mind, establishing a merely personal relation with God for the sake of one's own salvation. States of mind entered into as if no other beings were in existence but the soul and its Maker, must have in them a large element of selfishness. This is the religion of the hermit in his cave, or of St. Simon on his pillar, not that of Wesley in his camp-meetings, and of Howard in the prisons. Christians of the former class are besieged by devils, while the latter are attended and comforted by angels.

No; the love of God is best exhibited in the love of the neighbor. Unless our love of God leads us to establish fraternal and helpful relations with all about us, it is a soul without a body; ideas without words to reveal them; a house without a foundation.

“He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small.”

The angels have learned that lesson, so hard for

the carnal mind to comprehend, that happiness consists in loving and obeying God so supremely, that our selfhood is put in the last and lowest place, and our life is expended upon and for others.

This is to be like God. He did not create the world for the display of His own glory, as some of the old catechisms have it, but to make a universe of wise and happy creatures, and to flood all the spheres of creation with light and peace and beauty and eternal joy. To receive from Him and to give to others is the secret of heavenly happiness. The more the angel gives, the more he receives. The poorest is the richest. He that loses his life, finds it. The greatest is the servant of all. The wisest is the most childlike. Oh happy, glorious reversal of the aims, dispositions and feelings of our earthly and unregenerate state !

The occupations upon which the angelic energies are expended are domestic, social and civil. As the heavenly character begins with the heart, so the heavenly world begins with the home. Every society in heaven is a cluster of homes. Every house or home is a little paradise, in which an Adam and an Eve (for marriage is the proper state of the angels), conversing daily with Jehovah, en-

joy in mutual love the eternity of wedded bliss. The married pair is the unit of heaven, representing the union of the Good and the True in the church, and of the divine love and wisdom in the Divine Man. From the home, as the centre of life and power, proceed all the angelic activities for the public good.

As the individuals of every society differ in talent and power, and in the degrees of love and wisdom they have received from the Lord; as some are wiser and more capable than others; and as all inferior things must be subordinated to superior things, and inviolable order be prescribed for every office and function; therefore there are governments in heaven. The government of heaven is that of mutual love. The law of the Lord is the only law that reigns or can be executed in those blissful spheres. They are governors and princes and rulers there, who have the law of the Lord most clearly inscribed upon their judgments and most deeply engraven upon their hearts. They do not desire office, nor are they elected to it. They hold it by virtue of their inherent capacity, patent to all eyes, of executing it best. This principle assigns every incumbent to his post, from the king and the priest to the humblest servant and

doorkeeper, and the highest and lowest are bound together by the golden chain of love.

Talents are given to be employed, not to be buried in the ground. Every soul has a specific genius which constitutes its individuality. If the soul is immortal and retains its identity, it will be the same soul, intellectually and morally, that it was here. Therefore every faculty of man will come forth in the future life for its share of display, developiment and use. The man of science, the philosopher, the mathematician, the theologian will delight in study and reflection, and will communicate ever new and wonderful truths which they will draw from the exhaustless storehouses of the divine wisdom. Artists will gladden the eye with creations surpassing all terrestrial achievements. Poets will charm the mind with songs of perennial beauty. Musicians will ravish the soul with melodies of heaven. Death only frees, expands, elevates and glorifies all the capabilities of the good.

There are games and amusements and social parties and public gatherings in heaven as well as on earth. Everything which ever recreated and delighted the heart of man, and which can be thoroughly divested of evil and of the faintest sugges-

tion of evil, will be reproduced hereafter in more beautiful, enchanting and enduring forms. Nor will that histrionic talent, which God has so largely showered upon man, fail to impart under the purest auspices the instruction and amusement it was designed to bestow.

The life and joy of angels have a wider field of action than the pleasures of individual culture and the bestowal of their spiritual possessions upon others. Those happy beings have a vast series of duties to perform for the human race, which will be perpetual ; for the physical universe is the necessary basis of the spiritual, and men will never cease to be born in this world and to become angels in the next.

“The angels of every society,” says Swedenborg, “are sent on missions to men, to guard them and to withdraw them from evil affections and the thoughts thence originating, and to inspire them with good affections so far as they will freely receive them.”

“Are they not all ministering spirits?” says the apostle Paul.

There are societies of angels who have the charge of infants, whom death has early released from the bondage of nature.



Other societies instruct and educate them as they grow up.

There are some who assist in the resurrection of the dead, that perpetually-recurring miracle of divine love and power.

There are some who protect the souls of those newly deceased from the infestations of evil spirits.

There are some who are mediatory spirits between one society and another, each representing his own society and speaking for it.

There is thus a vast chain of connection and communication of all the societies with each other, so that the soul by successive progressions or changes of state may pass from one to another and explore all the wonders and glories of heaven.

And this chain of connection reaches to men in the natural sphere. As that charming poet, Gerald Massey, sings :

“ Eyes watch us that we cannot see ;  
Lips warn us which we may not kiss :  
They wait for us, and starrily  
Lean toward us from heaven’s lattices.

“ We cannot see them face to face ;  
But love is nearness : and they love  
Us yet, nor change with change of place,  
In their more human world above.”

Nor are heaven and earth the only fields of angelic love and labor ; for the angels are frequently sent into the hells, bearing the olive branch like commissioners of peace, to restrain the violence of infernal passion, and to mitigate the sufferings which evil spirits inflict upon each other.

“These occupations of the angels,” says Swedenborg, “are their general ones ; but to every angel is assigned his own in particular. For every general use is composed of innumerable other uses. All and each of these are co-ordinated and subordinated according to divine order, and taken together, they constitute and perfect the general use, which is the common good.”

This infinitely diversified and perfect system of organization is the form of heaven, the Grand Man. Into this form the divine love and wisdom flow, communicating as they descend the blessings of goodness and truth to each angel and spirit in his degree and according to his capacity. With the divine sphere, come not only affection and thought, but innocence, peace, joy, strength and power. Every nerve and fibre of the angelic form is perpetually pervaded with a serene delight.

How can *we* attain this grand ideal of individual and social perfection ? We, who bear the mark of

the beast on our foreheads and the indenture of hereditary evil in our hearts ; we, whose every step and thought and emotion have somewhat in them which is abhorrent to angels and to God ; we whose good deeds are selfish, whose very prayers and preachings are tainted with personal aspirations ; we, who assign to others a lower place than our own, who have pride to be wounded and vanity to be insulted ; we, whose avarice, ambition and sensuality cleave to our souls like the leprosy of Naaman to his body !

How can *we* inherit the kingdom of heaven ?

## CHAPTER IX.

### HELL: ITS DELUSIONS AND MISERIES.

**W**E now approach that dark and doleful world which is the opposite of heaven; where love is turned into hatred and wisdom into folly; light into darkness and pleasure into pain; which the Scriptures symbolize to us as a "bottomless pit" or the "lake burning with brimstone and fire," and which men have in all ages imagined to be a fearful prison-house down, down deep in the caverns of the earth, or far beyond the faintest ray of sun or star in the darkness of the outermost abyss.

What is it? Where is it? How came it? What will become of it?

Anxious, startling, but not irreverent questions! They have been partially answered. The veil has been lifted from this portion of the spiritual world also. We have new light, new knowledge to displace our old errors and crude notions. We have more terrible conceptions of the nature of sin, and a clearer vindication of the character of God.

We must rid ourselves of certain false ideas commonly entertained on this subject before we can see the truth unfolded by Swedenborg in all its beauty and grandeur. We will state these fundamental errors as we consider them, enter our protest against them, and beg the reader to dismiss them from his mind, until he sees them rationally disproved by the counter-statement of the truth itself.

Hell is not a place created by God for the punishment of sin. On the contrary it is *the heaven of the wicked*, created by themselves. They rush into it and abide in it of their own accord.

There is no attribute of God which calls for the punishment of sin or which could receive the least satisfaction from such punishment, any farther than it may be made a means of reforming and blessing the sinner. God is infinite love. His anger is a false inference drawn by the sensual man from his own state of evil and misery. God *wills* the same love, wisdom, peace, joy, to all in hell that he wills to all in heaven. He is the I Am, the sole-existing, the unchangeable.

There were no angels who fell from heaven and became devils; but all angels and all devils were

once men or women on some earth in the physical universe.

There is no great Evil Spirit, the Devil, who concentrates about himself all the powers of hell and wars with the Almighty for the mastery of the universe. How the idea of the personality of the devil originated, will be explained in its proper place.

The same universal truths which unfolded the mysteries of heaven, will reveal to us also the dreadful secrets of hell. These universal truths or keys are the doctrines of Influx, Free Agency, Degrees and Correspondence.

God is the sole life of the universe. He does not create life but gives it. It is uncreated. We live by his life; not by a force, derived perhaps from Him, but now fully our own and independent of Him; but by life from moment to moment flowing from Him and received into our spirit. This is influx. There is not, therefore, one God in heaven and another or a different one in hell; one law in heaven and an opposite in hell; an economy of grace in one and an economy of wrath in the other. The entire universe is held together by one breath, one life, one law.

What, then, is our own? Our will, our volition;

the power of turning our spiritual bodies as we please—to or from God; the power of determining our affections and thoughts, which are the spiritual substances of the soul, so that they shall present one form or another to the inflowing life of God; this is free-agency, never violated by God, because it is the fundamental distinction between man and God. If man were not a free agent he would be a material part of God, moved like a machine; and pantheism would be true.

The divine influx is always the same. The form determines how it shall be outwardly manifested. This is the atomic arrangement of the spiritual world corresponding to what we see daily in the natural world. The same influx of the sun produces the beautiful and the hideous in nature, the nutritious and the poisonous; the golden flower, emblem of sweetest thought, and the repulsive weed, fit only to be trodden under foot. The atomic arrangement of the vegetable and animal cells, all at first inspection undistinguishable from each other, determines what forms shall appear, whether it shall be a silver lily or a livid fungus; a scaly serpent or a burnished dove. The same law prevails in heaven and in hell and upon earth.

Hell, therefore, is created just as heaven is cre-

ated. It is first an organic *state* of the soul, and then an external place or world produced in correspondence with that state. There are three hells opposite to the three heavens; for the three degrees which exist in the human soul, natural, spiritual and celestial, open after death into the heaven or the hell which man has chosen for himself by his life in the world.

The primal cause of heaven and all its phenomena was shown to be the God-in-the-heart of the angels—that is, the love to God and the charity to the neighbor which engaged and exercised their supreme affections. This is the cause of all their light or wisdom, and of the glorious and beautiful objective world spread out before them, representing in living symbolism the spiritual mysteries of the kingdom of God within them.

It is obedience to the Divine will, making the angel *like* God, the finite image and likeness of God, which permits the influent life of God to pass forth into such resplendent external forms, and to make the glory and beauty and peace and joy of heaven. Disobedience to the Divine will, *unlike-ness* to God, hideous moral deformity is, on the same principle, the cause of hell. It is a question of media. Angelic media, organized forms of love



and charity, produce heaven. Infernal media, organized forms of hatred and falsity, produce hell.

Love is the life of heaven; hatred, the life of hell. The hatred of hell is the outward manifestation of a life which has been changed into its opposite by its passage through an utterly selfish form. The common spirit of all the hells, their connecting bond, is hatred to God and the neighbor. This hatred is the legitimate result of the love of self, when it rises from the place it was designed to occupy—the last and lowest—and absorbs and governs the whole soul.

The madness, the insanity of self-love cannot be seen in this world, while the subject of it, the selfish, avaricious or ambitious man, is surrounded by external restraints, such as the fear of the law or of the loss of life or reputation. After death, when the spirit acts from the ruling love alone without such external bonds, it rushes headlong into the wildest excesses, desires to possess all things, to rule over all things, even heaven and God himself, and burns with hatred and revenge against every object which stands or seems to stand in the way of its inordinate lusts.

The hatred of evil spirits against the angels, against little children, against the good and the

true in any other spirit, and especially against the Divine Word and the sphere of the Lord, is intense and almost incredible. Swedenborg frequently saw it exhibited as a blind, insensate but impotent fury. The cause of it is the interior antagonism between evil and good, so that the sphere of love and wisdom produces severe pain in the wicked.

"Art thou come hither to torment us?" exclaimed the evil ones to Jesus of Nazareth.

This fire of self-love in the heart, engendering pride, hatred, contempt, scorn, menace, revenge, malice, cruelty and all evil passions, is the hell-fire which torments the wicked for ever and ever.

The heat and light of the spiritual world correspond to the love and wisdom of those there, or to their opposites. The mind of an angel is radiant with intelligence, because his heart is glowing with love. The mind of a devil is dark with falsity, because his heart burns with hate. His thoughts correspond to his affections. The ignorance, the stupidity, the hallucinations, the malicious cunning, the absurd opinions, the monstrous conceptions, the ridiculous fantasies, the vituperative argumentation from false premises to false conclusions, which prevail continually in every society in hell, and which produce a representative sound like snarling, or

gnashing of teeth, heard by those approaching from a distance; all these things have no analogies upon earth except what may be found in some vast insane asylum, where men bereft of reason are congregated in every stage of madness—from the raving maniac to the drivelling imbecile.

Wisdom is light; its absence is darkness. Heaven is a world of light; hell, a world of darkness. Think of a kingdom of darkness! a world without the silvery or golden rays of a sun, but lit by flames as from burning coals or sulphureous vapors, or by the wandering *ignes fatui* and ghastly blue lights of swamps and wildernesses. Such is hell. Some evil spirits are at times plunged in total darkness. Even comparatively good spirits, undergoing vastation or judgment in the world of spirits or intermediate state, are sometimes kept for a long time in utter darkness.

Is not the fear of the dark, which children and even grown persons instinctively feel, a correspondence?—an involuntary shrinking of the soul from what represents the evil and the false?

These poor souls in hell cannot be visited by the light of heaven. Its accompanying heat would torture them by being turned into intense cold, and its light would not be seen by them at all, but

would obliterate what little light of their own they were enjoying in their sad, painful, pitiable way. The reason is that the light of heaven and the light of hell, although coming originally from the same source, flow through different media, and do not accord or correspond. An analogous phenomenon is seen on earth. Two waves of light, not according or corresponding, but coming into collision, produce darkness. Two rays of heat can also be made to produce cold or a fall in the thermometer; and two waves of sound may result, not in a sound of double intensity, but in absolute silence.

Heaven is concealed from the spirits in hell; for they cannot feel its heat nor see its light nor breathe its atmosphere. They deny its existence, they scoff at the idea of God, rave against the name of Christ and the Word, and attribute all things to nature as stoutly as the most inveterate scientific infidels of our own day. They can be brought back, however, into their earthly states of thought, and then adjoined to the intellectual sphere of the angels, so that they can think from their standpoint, and thus see all the wonders of heaven and understand all the truths of the Lord's spiritual kingdom. But when they return into the

state of thought which corresponds with their own emotional life (and they cannot rest permanently in any other), they forget everything they had seen or heard, and regard the wisdom of heaven with intense aversion.

What bodies have they? The spiritual body being the effigy of the soul, that which effigies a hateful and false nature must necessarily be hideous and ugly. The devils are therefore deformed and monstrous, fierce and cruel in aspect, hairy, black, filthy, a horrible mixture of man and beast. Their faces are sometimes lurid, sometimes like those of corpses, always fearful and disgusting. The sound of their voice is harsh and grating; the tones full of subtlety, malice, hatred and revenge. The stench that exhales from them is intolerable, differing with every society and every individual. All these external horrors are in strict correspondence with their interior states.

Yet such is the infinite self-conceit and delirious intellectual fantasies of these unhappy creatures, that they seem to each other to be men and women, wise and accomplished and enjoying a fair share of personal attractions! "This is of the Lord's mercy," says Swedenborg, "lest they should seem

as filthy, one to another, as they appear before the angels."

The abodes of these evil spirits and the objective world about them are also produced, as in the case of angels, from their own affections and thoughts.

Behold how they appeared to an eye-witness who lived consciously in both worlds at the same time :

"The hells appear, some like dens and caverns, some like great chasms and whirlpools, some like bogs and others like lakes of water. They are not opened except when evil spirits (once men) from the world of spirits are cast in thither. When they are opened, there is an exhalation from them, either like that of fire and smoke, such as appears in the air from buildings on fire, or like mists and thick clouds. I have been told that the infernal spirits neither see those things nor are sensible of them, because they are in their own atmosphere and thus in the delight of their own life."

"Some hells appeared like caverns in rocks tending inward and downward ; some like dens which wild beasts inhabit in forests ; some like arched caverns and holes such as are seen in mines.

“There are also thick forests in which the infernal spirits wander like wild beasts, and where also are subterranean dens into which those can flee who are pursued by others. There are also deserts where everything is barren and sandy. Into these are cast those who in the world have been more cunning than others in practicing deceit.”

“In some hells there is an appearance as of ruins of houses and cities after fires, in which ruins the infernal spirits dwell and conceal themselves. In the milder hells there is an appearance of rude cottages, in some cases contiguous, having the aspect of a city with lanes and streets. Within the houses are infernal spirits engaged in continual quarrels, enmities, blows, and fightings; in the streets and lanes robberies and depredations are committed.”

This weird region of fantasy and shadow, where the light is lurid and ghastly, and the fierce alternations of heat and cold are terrible, is haunted also, by correspondence with the evil shades of its inhabitants, by innumerable species of birds and beasts of prey and myriads of hideous and venomous reptiles, which represent outwardly in form and character the evil lusts and cruelties of the

heart which is utterly alienated from God and for ever divorced from heaven.

This fearful portion of the spiritual world must have been photographed upon the mind of the great poet when he conceived the following lines of the *Paradise Lost* :

“Through many a dark and dreary vale  
They passed, and many a region dolorous,  
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,  
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,  
A universe of death, . . .  
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds  
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,  
Abominable, unutterable, and worse  
Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,  
Gorgons and hydras and chimeras dire.”

The poet imagines this hell; Swedenborg explains it. The devils have rejected that divine love and wisdom which create through angelic souls the lovely and beautiful things in heaven; therefore they see no cheering and golden sun which represents the Lord, no blue ethereal dome, no rosy clouds, no rainbows in the air, no flowers upon the earth, no verdure in the fields,

No mountain-altars tipped with azure fire,  
No far-off glimmer of the emerald seas.



And now comes what seems to the mind trained in the current theology the strangest assertion of all. This hell is the heaven of evil spirits. These direful surroundings to them are beautiful; these horrible associations to them are pleasant; this awful life is the one they have chosen for themselves. They would not, if they could, exchange their lot for the light of heaven and the bowers of bliss. When let alone, when they let others alone, when they are not engaged in torturing each other, they are happy. It is, however, the happiness of the beast in his lair, of the bat in his cave, of the serpent in his slime. Such is the lot of those who make their bed in hell.

These are not punishments. God does not punish the sinner. The sun never goes down on his wrath. He forgives every sin as soon as it is committed. The punishment of sin lies in the organic law that in sinning you *become* evil. The wages of sin is death—spiritual death. After that, no love to God and the neighbor, no knowledge of truth, no yearnings for good, no possibility of heaven.

These evil spirits are not tortured by remorse of conscience. Conscience implies faith in God, respect for his laws, pain at their violation, retro-

spection, contrition. So long as a particle of conscience remains, so long as conviction of sin and feelings of remorse are possible, hell to that soul is impossible. Sin destroys the conscience, which is simply the pleading voice of God in the heart. The devils have no conscience. They deny God; they deny heaven; they deny sin. They call evil good, the false true. They delight in their wicked lusts and passions. They find an infernal delight in their hatred, contentions and cruelties. Their misery results from the restraints to which their inordinate desires are necessarily subjected.

The same inflowing life from God which tends to organize everything upon the spiritual principles involved in the structure of the Human Form, operates in hell as well as in heaven. Evil spirits, as well as good ones, are organized into societies related in their spiritual functions or uses to the corresponding organs and functions in man. Some member of the society speaks for all the rest, so that many appear as one devil—"My name is Legion, for we are many." The infernal society is a deformed Man—a monster. All the hells together appear to the Lord, who alone can occupy the infinite standpoint from which they are visible, under the form of a vast monster, the opposite of the

perfect and sublime Grand Man by which the whole heaven is figured.

This Grand Man of hell, this One representing all, was the Devil who tempted our Lord. This is the Devil or Satan always meant in the Word of God, which in its spiritual sense describes everything from a divine standpoint. Devils are innumerable. The Devil, as a single evil spirit supreme over all others, does not exist. He is a shadow, a symbol, a representative figure projected in front of us from innumerable similar figures invisible behind us. This view furnishes a solution to one of the strangest mysteries rising from the literal sense of the Scriptures, viz., the doctrine of a personal Devil, "archangel ruined," so vast and powerful as to contend with the Supreme Being for the throne of the universe.

In what occupations are devils, spiritual forms of evil and falsity, likely to engage? The will ever strives to go forth into act. The delight of life is to do and to be what one loves. The delight of heaven is to obey the Lord and to do good to the neighbor. The delight of hell is the gratification of an evil selfhood and supremacy over the neighbor. Harmony is the spirit of heaven. Discord is the spirit of hell. The word Satan in its

original means enemy, adversary; devil in the original is he that sets at variance. Heavenly love unites all for noble uses. Infernal love scatters and repels. All the angels turn to the Lord as a common centre; every evil spirit turns to himself as the centre of the universe and would be ruler of all.

In hell, therefore, no one applies himself to any good and useful labor for the benefit of others, except under dire compulsion. Each one endeavors to prey upon others and make them subservient to his own ends. Each one despises others in comparison with himself. Strange as it may appear, evil spirits delight to inflict sufferings and punishments upon all they meet. Their cunning, subtlety, cruelty, hatred and spirit of revenge are almost incredible. They make war upon each other and upon men in the flesh, and would if they could destroy the order and peace of heaven itself.

The evil we see upon earth, at which the cheek pales and the heart bleeds, is the breath of these spirits in hell who flow into the wills and understandings of men, infusing their own hatred and false persuasions into all who receive them. The wicked man is a kind of automaton moved from

within by spirits more wicked than himself, spirits who cunningly make a vile slave of him and who delight in the tortures they inflict upon him, and through him upon others. All scenes of drunkenness, theft, obscenity, murder, war and cruelty, are places of high revel to these invisible demons, who scent from afar the sphere of such things with exquisite delight.

When a good spirit enters heaven he is attracted by the force of spiritual affinity to the society which is engaged in the performance of the uses that he loves best. He is received with joy and tender affection. All hearts flow toward him; all minds instruct him; all hands are ready to help him. He is clad in beautiful garments; conducted to a resplendent home; escorted to feasts of charity and love; and, bound to all by the sweet ties of brotherhood, he is gradually settled into that niche of loving use and joy which he is destined to occupy for ever.

Let Swedenborg tell in his plain and graphic manner, the reception which a sinner meets when he reaches at last his own place in hell:

“From every hell there exhales a sphere of the lusts in which its inhabitants are. When this sphere is perceived by one who is in similar lust he

is affected at heart, and is filled with delight; for lust and the delight of it are one, since whatever a man lusts after is delightful to him. The spirit, therefore, turns himself toward the hell whence the sphere proceeds, and from delight of heart longs to go thither. As yet he knows nothing of the torments which exist there; and, if he did know, he would still desire to go; for in the spiritual world no one can resist his own lust, for it belongs to his nature, and every one there acts according to his nature."

"When, therefore, a spirit of his own accord or from his own freedom, directs his course to his own hell and enters it, he is at first received in a friendly manner, and is thus led to believe that he is among friends. This, however, continues only for a few hours. In the mean time he is examined with a view to discover the degree of his cunning, and thence of his power. When this is ascertained they begin to infest him; and this they do in various ways, and with gradually-increasing violence and severity. This is done by introducing him more interiorly and deeply into hell; for the spirits are more malignant in proportion as the hell they inhabit is more interior and deep."

"After the first infestations they begin to torture

him with cruel punishments, which they continue until he is reduced to the condition of a slave. But because rebellious commotions continually exist there, for every one in hell desires to be greatest and burns with hatred toward others, fresh outrages occur. Thus one miserable scene is changed into another. They who are made slaves are taken out of their thralldom to assist some new devil in subjugating others; when they who refuse to submit and to yield implicit obedience are again tormented in various ways. And this goes on perpetually."

This is a sad picture; but far more terrible pictures may be drawn from the pages of Swedenborg. They are fearful, painful, but necessary revelations. They are not given to frighten men into righteousness. They are truths which make part of a universal psychology, or science of the soul. They give us the morbid anatomy or pathology of that diseased spiritual state produced by sin. They show us what self-love is and what it leads to. They make us tremble and look inwardly at ourselves, then upward to God.

Disastrous levity and unbelief prevail in the world in regard to the fate of the unregenerate soul. Men excuse themselves for their bad pas-

sions and rest so contentedly in their false persuasions, that it is hard to convict them of sin at the bar of their own consciences, and to make them sensible of the awful fact, that their affections and thoughts, so far as they are evil and false, are already in hell, and felt and shared by the infernal spirits or the invisible world. The utter incredulity as to the everlasting fire threatened in the literal sense of the Scriptures, and the vague hope that a God of infinite mercy and power will some how or other finally save them from the consequences of sin, have produced a most culpable indifference on the whole subject. There is no point in spiritual philosophy on which the old theology is so dark and unsatisfactory, and which so urgently needs the clear, thorough, convincing and instructive light of a new dispensation of truth.

Great, indeed, are the miseries inflicted by evil spirits upon each other.

"Their highest satisfaction," says Swedenborg, "consists in the ability to punish, torture and torment one another, which they effect by artifices entirely unknown in the world, exciting exquisitely painful, and, as it were, corporeal sensations, and also dire and horrible fantasies, as well as extreme alarm and terror, with many other torments. In



this the diabolical crew perceive so much pleasure, that were it possible for them infinitely to increase and augment these pangs and torments, they would still be dissatisfied and burn with a desire to extend them; the Lord, however, frustrates their efforts and mitigates the anguish they inflict."

Few or none upon earth are capable of such extreme cruelty. Some touch of nature, some voice of a better angel, some buried instinct of tenderness will make the most degraded beings pause before reaching such depths of diabolism. The heavens are never utterly closed to men. In hell, however, such things are not only possible but inevitable, because no one goes to hell until he has been divested of all the truth and goodness he had known or felt on earth, and until he is utterly separated from angels and their holy spheres. This process is effected by the exploration and judgment of the soul in the world of spirits. The nature of that judgment and the reason of it are so important in a system of theological truth that its consideration is reserved for a separate chapter.

The hells of different kinds of criminals differ as widely from each other as the societies of heaven differ. Each infernal society is placed opposite to some heavenly society, of which its life is the spe-

cific corruption or perversion. When the hells are in great fermentation they react against the governing powers in heaven so forcibly that the light and peace of the angels would be sensibly diminished, and their influences upon men in the world vastly weakened, if the evil spirits were not reduced to submission and a kind of dormant state by intense suffering and fear. This is meant by "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." The punishment is effected by the mere approach of the angelic spheres.

The miseries of hell are therefore threefold. First, the self-inflicted miseries which flow from the organic state of the soul itself, so that its surroundings are necessarily wretched and loathsome, by the spiritual law of correspondential creation. Second, the miseries inflicted by some upon others in a thousand subtle and astonishing ways. Third, the miseries inflicted by the visitation of angelic spheres when it becomes necessary to maintain that degree of order and equilibrium upon which the stability of the universe depends.

Observe that these are not the punishments of the sins committed in the flesh, but the punishment of sins continually being committed on account of the organically evil state of the soul. No spirit is

ever punished for what he did in the world, but only for what he is now doing to afflict and destroy others. He has indeed acquired by his life in the world the peculiar spiritual constitution, the conformations of heart and mind that continually impel him to the commission of the evil which precipitates him into suffering and punishment.

A great theological consequence flows from this rational and philosophical view of the punishment of sin. Christ did not undergo the punishment of sin. His work was not to deliver us from the effects of sin, but from its power and bondage. Effects are only removed by removing their causes. Sin is *always* punished, by the loss of spiritual vitality, by the weakening of conscience, by the receding of angelic spheres, by the enveloping tyranny of evil. The infliction of pain, physical or mental, cannot atone for sin, cannot satisfy the offended majesty of the law. This revenge, for it is nothing else, is altogether abhorrent to God and angels, who instantly forgive every evil thing done against them and pity the doer. The small part of the miseries of hell for which God may be considered responsible, viz., those induced by the visitation of angelic spheres, is never permitted except for the defence of the innocent, the reformation of

the offender so far as may be possible, and the repression of evil ; and never, never in the sense of a satisfaction to divine justice for outrages committed against it.

In every soul which has a just idea of the love, wisdom and power of God, there is an instinctive outcry and revolt against the existence of hell, and especially against its perpetuity. The traditional Church which imposes its incomprehensible dogmas upon men as sacred mysteries of faith, gives no satisfactory answer to the questioning soul. What has the New Church to say on the subject? It professes to have a thorough, scientific and philosophical basis, and to see truth by its own light. It is especially bound to give a reason for hell and its miseries, as it teaches a most miserable and fearful doom of the unregenerate ; a hell of utterable darkness and horror, of excruciating bodily torments, of hideous shapes and fantasies, of painful alternations of heat and cold, of serpents swarming around the terrified spirits and biting them as the people were bitten by the serpents in the wilderness ; and a thousand other fearful modes of suffering.

Why does God permit these things to exist?

The old theology does not question his *power* ; it

questions his *will*. He could, if he chose, it tacitly says, put an end to all the miseries of hell, release the wretched inmates, forgive their sins, illumine their minds, purify their hearts and elevate them to heaven. Why does He not do so? Oh, they have sinned away their day of grace, and must endure for ever the fearful punishment of sin. Their sentence is just, their sufferings are merited, the justice of God is vindicated, and his glory is as clearly manifested in the eternal misery of the sinner as in the eternal felicity of the saint.

The New Church, repudiating these doctrines as irrational and unscriptural, would rescue theology from their baleful influence. It affirms that God has no justice which can be outraged and insulted by a violation of his laws, and which demands a retribution in shape of punishment for sin. Spiritual laws are organic. They are expressions or modes of life and are not created. They exist in the nature of things, by primal necessity, coincidentally with God himself. God *is* law. He creates and governs man by the laws of his own being. There is not one law for God and another for man, but the same for both.

When man violates the divine commandments which are the laws of God's life, he does not incur

God's displeasure, but excites his pity. He suffers a dreadful organic change in his own spiritual nature which entails upon him eternal and painful consequences; but they are not legal punishments of sin, but necessary effects of a cause which he himself has put into operation, viz., the turning himself away from God so as to receive the influx of his life into a perverted and disorderly form. Hell is only punishment of sin as a burn is the punishment for putting your hand in the fire.

Hell, therefore, is not created by God at all, but by man, and it is created through his violations of the divine laws. Hell is not governed by any other laws or with any other spirit than the laws and spirit which prevail in heaven. The miseries of hell flow from the influx and operation of the laws and spirit of heaven into perverted and disorderly forms. Man changes; God is unchangeable. God gives his bread to all alike, but evil spirits turn it into a stone; fish, but they change it into a serpent; flowers, but in evil hands they become poisonous weeds.

If God is not responsible for hell, even in a legal sense, why does he not change, suppress, or destroy it?

If the hearts of all the devils could be changed

and turned in faith and love toward God, hell and its wretchedness would disappear. The life and laws and forms of heaven would become objective there and it would be another heaven. Why does God not accomplish this? Because He cannot. He cannot forcibly change or compel the will, the life, the love, the selfhood of man or spirit. That would be to destroy his free-agency, his identity, his individuality. At the moment of his creation, of his differentiation from God, man acquires this free-agency, this spiritual impenetrability, and it can never be taken from him.

Why, then, does God not withdraw his sustaining life from the hells and let them perish?

Because He cannot. He cannot change, for that would be to cease to be God. He cannot lie; He cannot violate the laws of His own being; He cannot defraud; He cannot commit an act of folly; He cannot cease to love nor to create. The life, the breath, the power which flow from Him through the universe are one. He cannot divide them, giving a little here and a little there, infusing or withdrawing as He may choose. He gives all to all; the difference in result is not due to partiality of influx, but to differences of reception. He cannot withhold life from one sphere and give it to an-

other. He would then be present in one and not in the other; He would cease to be omnipresent. In fine, God could not destroy hell without at the same moment destroying heaven and earth. The whole universe is bound together in the same infinite, indissoluble web of life and law.

Why, then, does not God, infinite in wisdom and resources, institute measures for the instruction, discipline, reformation and final regeneration of evil spirits? His bounty and mercies are lavished upon the earth? Why do they not penetrate the awful shadows of the spiritual abyss?

The rational mind fails to see why a short probationary period here, although neglected and despised, should be followed by such a direful and irrevocable hell. It demands reasons, not metaphysical reasons, not theological fictions, but organic reasons for such a result. Organic reasons are those which connect the result with all the universal laws of life, showing that it is no arbitrary enactment, or part of a scheme or plan, but a necessary and inevitable effect of universal and eternal causes.

How can God communicate with the hells?

The spirit of God cannot enter into a devil and fill him with the divine presence so that He can



speak through him as the Angel of Jehovah did to the children of Israel. This mode of revelation and instruction is not available, for the divine sphere would instantly throw the evil spirit into such agony that thought would be impossible. Instead of being an inspired oracle he would be at the best a raving maniac.

Divine truth, descending by interior influx and dictation into the minds of evil spirits, is turned into its opposite falsity. Swedenborg saw this fact experimentally proven. The Word of God thus passed through the minds of those in hell would be written out externally in opposite characters, making it the Book of Hell, as full of hatred and falsehood as it really is of love and wisdom. Teaching by inspiration is then impossible also.

Why not send the loving and shining angels to them as missionaries of light and peace? The sphere of the angels is abhorrent to the devils. They would be inflamed with direful animosity at their approach, as a den of serpents would rear their heads and writhe and hiss and strike at the advance of a little child toward them. The influx of heavenly light throws them into total darkness; the influx of heavenly love excites their evil passions into fearful activity. These things are not

accidental or imaginary, but real and organic; flowing from laws as fixed and positive as those of chemistry or physics.

Suppose the evil spirits to be made quiescent and to listen to what the angels had to say; what impression could be thus made upon them? The angels could speak nothing but *spiritual* truth, for they know nothing else. If this were not changed into the opposite, as it would be if flowing into their minds by the interior way, it would at least be utterly unintelligible. Evil spirits in hell are thoroughly sensual. The celestial, spiritual and even the rational degrees of the soul are totally closed. They think and feel from a standpoint far lower than that of men upon the earth. They are veritably wild beasts in human form, inaccessible to truth, reason and mercy.

The Word of God interpreted in its lowest and most sensuous manner might possibly still reach and influence them; but the literal meaning of the Word of God with its sensuous appearances of truth, which the natural man takes for real truth, is limited to nature, to a world of time and space. It was written in nature and in natural forms; it cannot be elevated above nature. It cannot be presented in its literal text to beings who are living

in a state, where time and space have no fixed externity, but change with the changes of the soul.

The inhabitants of hell are, therefore, plainly out of the reach of the saving influences of God, and of the Word of God either spiritual or literal, and of the angels and good spirits. They cannot receive truth; they cannot be drawn by love. They can only be controlled by fear, and by fear excited by terrible suffering.

Is this state to be eternal?

In the spiritual world there are no times and spaces such as in ours; no archives of government, no record of events, no historical evolutions. Spirits know nothing of time. The spiritual idea of eternity is not an idea of an interminable succession of events, but an idea of fixity or perpetuity of state. The question then resolves itself into this; can the state of evil spirits be changed so as to be brought into harmony with the laws of heaven?

In despair of such a result, seeing no causes at work likely to produce it, the benevolent mind, intolerant of an eternal hell, indulges the hope that the sufferings of the wicked will be terminated by a process of gradual annihilation. Swedenborg does not teach this doctrine, although some of his statements invest it with a little plausibility. He

says that some spirits are so far deprived of their own evil life by long-continued sufferings, they lose their memory and their reflective faculties to such an extent, that they do not know they are men or that they ever were men. They appear imbecile and almost lifeless; sometimes as skeletons sitting solitary in sandy wastes or among stony ruins; sometimes as almost formless masses, mere ghosts in our view, flickering in dark caverns or gliding along the forest shades. It seems that a step farther, and they would cease to be.

Another and more cheering view of this subject, not distinctly stated by Swedenborg, but clearly deducible from his writings, is, that hell, by means of punishment, suffering and discipline, will be reduced to such thorough external order and submission, that its evils shall become fairly quiescent, and its life made to correspond with the sensual-corporeal sphere of human life, when it is compelled to live and act in severe subordination to the higher faculties.

In this state the devils will be under a perfect but salutary despotism, compelled to useful labors or excited to them by rewards and all the selfish motives which animate unregenerate men. They will be bound by their own lusts and interests,

which are those of self and the world, to order, peace and useful employments, remaining, however, thoroughly unspiritual.

The possibility of utilizing the utter selfishness of the spirit for the public good, is apparent from the history of the human race. Men are quite willing, for the honors and high places of the world, for the delights and pleasures of sense, to control their evil passions so far as to display an outward civility and apparent good feeling for the neighbor. Splendid civilizations indeed may be built up, even churches may be made to flourish, with no basis of motive for the whole work but utter selfishness, intense ambition and the love of glory or power.

That acute and original thinker, Henry James, was evidently contemplating such an amelioration of the hells when he penned the following paragraph :

"I have not the slightest idea of hell as a transitory implication of human destiny, as an exhausted element of human progress. On the contrary, I conceive that the vital need of human freedom exacts its eternal perpetuity. I admit, nay I insist, that the devil is fast becoming and will one day be a perfect gentleman ; that he will

wholly unlearn his nasty tricks of vice and crime, and become a model of sound morality, infusing an unwonted energy into the police department, and inflating public worship with an unprecedented pomp and magnificence. Otherwise I cannot understand how the Lord, with a full knowledge of the character and tendencies of Judas Iscariot, yet chose him into the number of the sacred twelve, and entrusted him with the provision of his and their material welfare. But the gentleman is infinitely short of the MAN; and however gentlemanly the devil will infallibly grow, there he will stop, and leave the sacred heights of manhood unattained."

Hell, even at its worst, exercises a vast use to men, a most important and direct aid in our regeneration. Our own evil loves, hereditary and acquired, connect us organically with its deepest recesses. We cannot be extricated from this spiritual abyss, unless we are made conscious of our being there; unless we see ourselves as interiorly evil and corrupt; and unless we are driven to the Lord and the Word by strong conviction of sin, a fearful sense of its overwhelming power over us, and of our own utter helplessness against its direful assaults. This is effected by the influx of hell into our interiors, when our secret evil and falsehood

are stirred up and made active, when we are led into dreadful temptation, and spiritual doubt and despair, out of which we are finally delivered by the Lord. Our heavenly Father thus utilizes the devils to the utmost, and turns to some good use every evil thing they inflict upon us.

This amelioration of the hells can only be possible after the thorough regeneration of men upon earth. When all men in the flesh react against evil spirits just as the angels do in heaven, the powers of hell will have no corresponding ultimate upon earth; and they must either be annihilated, or reduced into external correspondence with the lowest sphere of human life, which is neither spiritual nor rational, but sensual and corporeal. There they may find rest and peace.

It is a happy and ennobling thought, that he who performs a single good deed from a pure motive, contributes his little mite, not only to the salvation of his own soul, but to the order and beauty of the world, to the strength and glory of heaven, to the amelioration and repose of hell, and to the final reign of eternal peace!

## CHAPTER X.

### THE WORLD OF SPIRITS.

THE world of spirits is an intermediate state of existence with its corresponding objective phenomena, into which all men are ushered immediately after death, by the process of the resurrection, which is only the withdrawal of the spiritual body from the natural. The state is intermediate between heaven and hell. Men are called *spirits* while living in that world; *angels*, if they pass into heaven; *devils*, if they direct their steps to hell. Heaven, hell and the world of spirits constitute together the spiritual world.

This is the *sheol* of the Old Testament, the *hades* of the New; erroneously translated in our English Bibles, *hell* and the *grave*; and known by tradition as "the place of departed spirits."

It is strange that Protestant Christianity has lost the knowledge of this intermediate state, and that its acute thinkers and biblical students have not re-discovered and proclaimed it.



The idea of an intermediate state in which souls are kept for judgment, previous to entering heaven or hell, is to be found in the most ancient mythologies and philosophies.

It was a current doctrine with the Jews. Josephus expressly defines the word *sheol*, which our translators render hell, as "that place wherein the souls of the righteous and of the unrighteous are detained."

It was universally accepted as an article of rational faith in the Christian church until the time of the Protestant reformation.

Dr. Jung Stilling, in his "Theory of Pneumatology," affirms :

"The universal Christian world from the very commencement, believed in an invisible world of spirits, which was divided into three different regions : heaven, or the place of the blessed ; hell, or the place of torment ; and then a third place, which the Bible calls *hades*, or the receptacle for the dead, in which those souls which are not ripe for either destination, are fully prepared for that to which they have adapted themselves in this life."

The only theory which can account for the manner in which the scriptural doctrine of an intermediate state has been ignored by Protestant theology,

is, that it was done to counteract as much as possible the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. The perversions of truth on this subject, calculated to extend the spiritual dominion of the Catholic clergy and to augment the revenues of the church, were so revolting to reason and so dangerous to society, that the reactionary spirit carried the Reformers to the extreme of dropping from their creed an article of faith, which was necessary to a proper understanding of what the Scriptures teach about the spiritual world.

If there is no intermediate state or life, the soul must go consciously into heaven or hell after death, which is a practical judgment upon it, rendering useless the formal judgment which is expected at the last day. Or it must remain for ages in a state of unconsciousness or insensibility, which is an idea utterly unscriptural.

"This day," said our Lord to the penitent thief, "thou shalt be with me in paradise."

Leaving the theologians to adjust these difficulties as they please, or to learn the genuine truth from the excellent works of Hayden and Rendell on the last judgment, I shall endeavor to prove the existence and uses of the world of spirits from a different and more interior standpoint.

Heaven and hell are extremes ; they are antipodal, antagonistic states of the spirit. All in heaven are good, all in hell are evil. They have attained their final states by the separation of the good from the evil, of the true from the false, so that there is an impassable gulf fixed between them. The introduction of anything good into hell, or of anything evil into heaven would produce confusion of mind, disorder, and pain in either sphere.

Millions of human beings die every week and pass into the spiritual world. They are generally in states of mixed good and evil. There are few men so regenerate that the searching light of heaven will not discover some dark corners in their minds and some evil spot in their hearts ; few so reprobate, but they have some invisible chord in the spirit which can be attuned to heavenly music. The vast majority of men are mixtures of good and evil blended in apparently inextricable confusion.

Now man wakes from his death-sleep into the spiritual world the same as he was when he lay down to die. The mere act of death produces no change in the affections, thoughts, opinions, aspirations, appetites or habits. No religious exercises, no prayers or faith can instantaneously change evil into good. There is no sudden transformation of

a sinner into a Christian or of a Christian into an angel. Such an idea is a theological fiction without basis in reason or Scripture; and he who trusts to it will be fearfully deceived.

When a man rises from the dead—that is, when his spiritual body is extricated from his physical form, the laws of the spiritual world instantaneously operate upon him. He comes into the exercise of spiritual thought. He speaks spontaneously the rich and wonderful language of spirits. The objects around him have no externity independent of him, but they are the interior things of his own spirit presented in visible forms as a world outside of him.

This newly-risen spirit cannot instantly enter heaven. Why? Because his spiritual states of affection and thought do not accord with those of the angels. He could neither see what they saw nor hear what they heard. If it were possible for him, without the necessary changes of state or the intervention of intermediate spirits, to be placed suddenly and bodily in the midst of a heavenly society, what would result? He would be a discord in their assembly, a blot in their sky, a source of pain and terror. They would tremble at the sphere of his evil thoughts and desires. His life

would project itself outwardly around them in terrible or disgusting forms, black clouds in the sky, dark caverns in the earth, lurid fires in the distance, serpents or toads or obscene birds. Heaven would be rent as with an earthquake. Such a thing is therefore organically impossible.

Neither can the new-comer from earth go at once into hell. He bears with him some traces of goodness and truth, some touch of kindness, some remnant of humanity, which would produce similar disorder in the infernal sphere. It would be like the approach of an angel to the hells, when darkness comes over them, and terror seizes them and frightful pains lay hold of them.

The new-comer himself would be more dreadfully tortured by the experiment than either the angels or the devils. The sphere of heaven would be intolerable to the evil elements, and the sphere of hell equally so to the good elements in his nature. Between the two conflicting elements he would be torn asunder with sufferings far more severe than he would experience in the hell suited to his evils when they have been isolated from all his better life.

It is plain that *the law of spiritual relation*—namely, that the objective world springs up in cor-

respondence with the subjective states of the spirit, demands and effects the total separation of good and evil spheres, so that heaven and hell stand eternally apart. This separation is gradually effected in the world of spirits. It is called in Scripture the judgment.

The world of spirits is therefore created, just as heaven and hell are created. It is to outward appearance a vast world, not fixed in time and space like our material orbs, but plastic and changeable to the outflowing thoughts and affections of its inhabitants. It appears differently to different classes or societies of spirits, and external objects come and go, appear and disappear, are created or annihilated in correspondence with the spiritual panorama which is passing in the interiors of the souls of those who live there.

The form which this world of spirits assumes to men recently deceased is very much like that of the world they have left. The reason is that they are still in possession of their exterior memory, thoughts, affections and life; for man has an external and an internal life which are frequently very different. Newly-arrived spirits think from their memories of time and space, reason from the sensuous appearances which dominated their intellects in this

life, and act from external motives as they did here.

The consequence is that they at first build up around themselves, *by the law of spiritual creation*, things similar to those they had known and loved in the earth-life. They collect together in nationalities, are divided according to their religious opinions, and have civil cliques and social coteries just as we do here. The external world around them is somewhat similar to that they have left behind. The English have some spiritual counterpart of their London, the French of their Paris, the Italians of their Rome. They are concerned about what they shall do and how they shall live. They manifest the spirit of trade, the lust of office, the zeal for science, and have the same loves and appetites and opinions there as they had here. It is difficult for the new-comers into that extraordinary world to believe that they are dead to the world of nature and living in a world of spirits.

All this, however, is transitory. The population is ever shifting. Millions appear every week on this new field of action, where good and evil spirits are contending for the supremacy over man, but as many disappear as come. They do not die. What has become of them? No one sees them go away ;

no one can follow them ; but millions weekly (to speak in a temporal manner) disappear from the sight and thought of those who remain behind. Where are they ?

They have gone away into heaven or hell. A great change has come over them. Their exterior spiritual life has been taken away from them or made quiescent. Their interior natures have come out to view. They no longer have two faces. They no longer think one thing and say another. All external bonds and restraints are removed, forgotten, despised. There is no fear of the law, or of public opinion, no influence of fashion, no conventionalisms, no respect for wealth or position, no sacrifices to decorum, no concealment from interested motives. The man or the woman stands out in utter spiritual nakedness, every thought, every feeling exposed to view, everything which had been whispered in the ear in closets proclaimed on the house-tops !

With this change from the exterior to the interior of the spiritual life, a corresponding change occurs in their external surroundings. The shadowy London and Paris of the external man disappear ; nationalities are lost for ever ; churches are gone ; outward organizations are nothing ; conventional-



isms perish ; their own names and history are forgotten as shadows not worth a thought. Their qualities alone survive. From them they love, think, feel, see, live.

When the exterior mind is thus closed in a good spirit, he is led by angels into places of instruction. He is there divested of all his errors of opinion and taught the truths of heaven which he receives with inexpressible delight. Soon he discovers some way or road invisible to others, some way overarched with flowers and fragrant with odors and flagged with precious stones and brilliant with a great light, a way that leads him upward and onward into the heavenly society for which he is now prepared and where he will live for ever.

The interiorly evil spirit, however, does not go to any place of instruction. In his conceit of superior wisdom he refuses it ; in his aversion to spiritual truth, he abhors it. The exteriors of the world of spirits disappear also from his vision, and he seeks those whose interior life and loves are similar to his own. He also discovers a road or way invisible to others, but it is a dark cleft between frowning rocks, a downward path, pervaded by horrible stench and overhung by lurid vapors,

and he treads it eagerly with the delight of an obscene bird flying to a dark wood where the carcass of some wild beast is lying. He finds himself at last in some one of the hells which are opposite to the societies of heaven.

What is the cause of these remarkable phenomena?

The judgment: "It is appointed unto all men to die, and after this the judgment."

Yes, these spirits have been judged. The books have been opened, and they have been judged out of them and "according to their works." The sheep have been separated from the goats. Those who had oil in their lamps have gone into the marriage-feast, and against those who had none the door has been shut. Those who had used their talents wisely, have had their spiritual riches indefinitely increased; those who had buried their gift in the earth, have been stripped of all and cast into outer darkness.

There are two judgments: a special or individual judgment for each soul, and a general judgment which takes place at the end of every Church, or at the close of every Dispensation. These processes occur always in the world of spirits; not in heaven, nor in hell, nor upon the earth. The great

work and use of the intermediate state is the judgment.

*What is the judgment?*

Our ideas on this matter, drawn from civil associations, are wholly erroneous. Our mind's eye sees a tribunal, a judge empowered to pass sentence, an array of witnesses, evidence given and substantiated, the scales of justice produced, the balance struck, the sentence pronounced according to law, and finally executed.

Nothing of this happens in the judgments of the spiritual world. Judgment is the preparation of the soul for heaven or for hell, by the separation of the good from the evil and the true from the false in all the constituent elements of the life and character. It is an unfolding of the ruling love, a revelation of the inmost life and abiding qualities of the spirit. From the good, all the evil and false things derived from their earth-life, *adherent* but not *inherent*, are taken away, so that they become thoroughly good and fit for heaven. From the evil, all the apparent goodness and truth they possess, *adherent* also but not *inherent*, are taken away, and they become thoroughly evil and can live nowhere but in hell.

Hear the Word :

"Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."

And again :

"I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Yes, we must be either one thing or the other, utterly good or utterly evil. Judgment is separation; the separation of good and evil spirits, and the separation of good and evil elements in the individual spirit. No evil passions, no false opinions, no unruly tempers, no frailties, no petty faults, no thorn in the flesh, will cleave to the good man, who has set his face steadfastly toward the great Sun of the spiritual universe. On the other hand, no suavities of manner, no redeeming traits, no generous qualities, no flashes of wit or wisdom, no love of parents or children or country, will remain with the man whose self-love and love of the world have been so great as to give the preponderance of evil to his nature.

How is this judgment effected ?

By the light of heaven, which is divine truth, and through the mediation of angels. This divine

truth is the Son of man who comes in all his glory, having the holy angels with him.

The world of spirits is very populous; far more so than our earth, over which it hangs like a vast spiritual cloud hiding the light of heaven, not only from our natural but also from our spiritual eyes. Not only are the dead of a whole generation there, but angels from heaven and evil spirits from hell in great numbers. Our own attendant spirits, good and evil, are there; our guardian spirits who befriend and guide us, and our evil spirits who assault and tempt and accuse us night and day. This vast multitude which no man can number, is under the government of angels, who are engaged in organizing and reorganizing the various elements into different societies, so as to detect the organic spiritual affinities of each individual and to give full play to the ruling love which finally determines his abode.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

He did not create hell nor the world of spirits. They sprang into being as necessities, caused by the voluntary perversion of divine order by man. If the earth was perfect and all men lived and thought like angels, the heavens could rest upon the earth,

like the upper stories of a house upon its foundations, and at death no intermediate state would be necessary, but men could pass instantaneously to their proper places in heaven.

The world of spirits performs a great use by intervening between our world and heaven and hell. If the heavens flowed immediately into our evil and corrupted natures, we should be tortured as the devils are at the approach of angelic spheres. If the hells flowed directly into us, the last remains of our spiritual life would be suffocated and we should be turned into beasts. That fearful danger really impended when God manifested himself in the flesh, to contend, by his divine sphere or Holy Spirit, against all the hells, and thus to rescue mankind from spiritual death.

The world of spirits acts as a great breakwater, saving us from a spiritual deluge, as a vast cloud protecting us alike from the light of heaven which would blind and from the fire of hell which would destroy us. By the arrangement of forces in that world, the adjustment of equilibriums, the Lord maintains the free-agency of man, and secures that freedom of will and thought which is requisite for regeneration.

Societies in the world of spirits are arranged

according to the good or evil passions of the soul. Each one is a centre of attraction to all the similar elements which exist in the interior life of those who approach. The spheres emanating from them are very powerful. A soul undergoing judgment is conducted from one to another, and if there is any similar good or evil in him, he is filled with delight and wishes to stay with his newly-found friends. It may be a transitory connection, such as the chemists would call a feeble combination, and the spirit will pass on to other societies for which he feels a stronger affinity.

In this manner the good and evil in the soul are brought to the surface. Good men who have evils still clinging to them, associate with these evil spheres until their own evils are fully exposed to view, and until by the reaction of the good elements and by repentance, mortification, prayers and even sufferings, they are delivered from them and extricated by the superior attraction of the angelic societies. Evil men are brought in a similar manner into contact with good spheres; and at first they may appear like angels of light, but their goodness and truth being merely superficial, fade away, or are put off, and they escape as from a prison and betake themselves eagerly to those soci-

eties which are in fullest sympathy with their own evil lusts.

Searching are the methods, inexorable the processes and fearful the revelations of the world of spirits. Double-dealing is detected; the hypocrite unmasked; the false prophet exposed; and the soul without a wedding-garment is cast out from the feast. On the other hand, the good are delivered from temptation and trial, restored to spiritual sight and hearing, released, strengthened, comforted, purified; and the souls under the altar groaning for deliverance, are lifted into heaven.

And all this is done without infringing upon the free-agency of any spirit, without any compulsion, without any violence. The good go into heaven and the evil into hell of their own accord; the former like birds released from the hand, that soar away into the blue sky, or nestle among the green leaves; the latter like serpents that glide stealthily down into the darkest holes of the earth, hiding from the light of God.

These wonderful operations going on in the world of spirits are of immeasurable importance to us. They are not far off like the historical events of some distant planet. They are immediately over and around us; yea they are *within* us.



Every society, every individual in that world is a centre of influx and a focus of attraction to men in this. Our very life flows to us through them, and it is colored and changed and ennobled or perverted according to the media through which it has passed. We are insensibly following our good and evil spirits in their movements, and repeating their experiences every day of our lives. We are nearing the heaven or the hell to which they are going, and putting off the evil or the good as they do. We cannot serve two masters; we must choose between them.

People who think there is to be an end of the world and a general judgment day for all who have ever lived on earth, and who locate the theatre of that judgment in the clouds or within the realm of nature, and see no absurdity in such a belief, are unwilling to entertain the more rational doctrine, that the judgment is a spiritual process, entirely out of and above nature, which occurs in an intermediate state or world of spirits.

Such persons have derived their ideas from a sensuous interpretation of the symbolical language of prophecy. In that language the end of one Dispensation or Church is always described as the end of the world or the consummation of the age,

and the dawn of a new Dispensation as the coming of the Lord to judgment.

A strong array of evidence in support of this view might be drawn from Scripture, but a single passage is sufficient; for that is so clear and positive as to carry conviction to the most doubting mind.

The prophet Joel predicts that the time will come when there will be wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke; that the heavens shall tremble, and the sun be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, and the stars withdraw their shining. These things are very similar to those which the New Testament predicts about the last judgment and the second coming of the Lord. Now the apostle Peter, preaching on the day of Pentecost the death and resurrection of Jesus, quotes this very passage from the prophet Joel, and assures his hearers that the prophecy was then and there fulfilled. Peter's mind was illumined to see that the prophetic language described the passing away of an old system and the inauguration of a new.

The world is the Church, the cosmos, the system of order and beauty, which having become cor-

rupted, ends or perishes, while a new earth and a new heaven take its place. Does not Paul say, "Now once *in the end of the world* hath He appeared to put away sin?" Did the world of nature come to an end in the time of Paul?

So Swedenborg declares that the Church has come to an end; that the apostolic Church is consummated; the Dispensation ended; that prophecy is fulfilled; that the last judgment has taken place; that the Lord has come again in the clouds of heaven with all his holy angels.

When you understand what he means by these things which appear so improbable, so impossible to the natural man, the light which illumined the mind of Peter will illumine yours, and you will see that the Word of God is not to be interpreted literally but spiritually; and that the end of the world or consummation of the age, the second coming of the Lord, the resurrection, the judgment, the descent of the New Jerusalem, are spiritual events which take place in the world of spirits; and are known in the material world only by the effects they produce upon the minds and hearts of men.

In the chapter on hell and its miseries it was stated, that whenever a society in hell reacted too

violently against the antipodal or antagonistic society in heaven, so as to break the equilibrium or orderly arrangement which secures the peace of the angels and the free-agency of men, it is reduced and held within bounds by a special descent or visitation of the divine truth. This is the principle involved in the general judgments now to be described. They are visitations of the angels descending into the world of spirits with the Divine Sphere or Truth acting through them. They come to separate the evil from the good, to select the wheat from the tares, to break up and disperse the congregated powers of evil and falsehood, and to let in a new and blessed light from heaven.

Under the past dispensations and for reasons too abstruse to be detailed in this place, the Lord permitted the spirits who were in mixed states of good and evil, and especially those who had been in possession of the divine truths of the church, but had not lived a life according to them, to remain for many centuries in the world of spirits. They framed governments ecclesiastical and civil for themselves; and so infatuated were they with their own supposed goodness and wisdom, that they called their spiritual surroundings *heaven*. This was the heaven that fled away or departed like a

flaming scroll at the judgment; for it cannot be supposed that the heaven of angels, the home of the blessed, the throne of God can ever be shaken or destroyed.

Vast multitudes of men under all these dispensations were so good that they passed readily into heaven; and vast multitudes were so evil that they threw themselves speedily into hell, under the special judgment or process of separation already described. The residue constituted a mighty power of evil and falsity, resting like a vast incubus upon the minds of men on earth and reacting with disturbing aggressiveness against the bright and loving forces of heaven. When this state reached its climax, when the fullness of time was come, there was a visitation of Divine Truth, and a terrible judgment accomplished by the angels.

These judgments in the world of spirits were no doubt attended by the striking and awful phenomena described by the prophets; for the symbols employed in Scripture are the veritable forms and realities of the spiritual world. The heavens fled away; the sea disappeared; the sun was darkened; *their* apparently external nature was convulsed; there was fire, and blood and smoke; cities were overwhelmed; the earth yawned; and the rocks and

mountains fell upon the condemned spirits who fled in terror from an exhibition of what *they* considered "the wrath of God."

These sublime and terrible scenes, which the literalist is vainly expecting to occur in our natural world, have already taken place four times in the world of spirits, the only possible theatre of judgment.

The first church instituted by God extended from Adam to Noah. Of its peculiarities, its successive changes, and its fate, Swedenborg is the only historian. They are narrated in the spiritual sense of the first ten chapters of Genesis. The perversions of truth and the moral corruptions toward the close of that antediluvian dispensation, must have been terrible indeed; for the judgment executed upon it in the world of spirits is described symbolically as a great flood which destroyed the whole world.

The second church extended from Noah to Abraham. Its judgment is described representatively by the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. The real cause of that catastrophe and of many others, no doubt, that occurred in the world about that time, was the judgment executed in the world of spirits on the expiring church, and the inaugura-

tion of an entirely new dispensation of which Abraham was the leader.

The third or Jewish church extended from Abraham to Christ, when, like the others, it was consummated and judged and its abused talents taken from it and given to another.

That Christ executed a great judgment in the world of spirits at his first advent, is a fact of stupendous value—a fact, strange to say, not fully known or understood in the Christian church. All the prophecies of the Old Testament culminated in Christ. They were all fulfilled in Him. The most of them allude to the judgments executed by him.

The judgment described by the prophets was executed by Him *in the world of spirits*, on the residue of the Jewish church, who still lingered in the intermediate state—the good being detained there by the wicked, and the wicked assaulting both heaven and earth from that favorable standpoint. It was there that David was detained until Christ came; for the Apostle Peter declares that in his own day, David, a thousand years deceased, had not yet ascended into heaven. It was there that Christ preached to the souls in prison, and released them from their bondage to infesting evils and falsities, and took them with Him into heaven.

John the Baptist, preaching Christ to the people, declares to them this great judgment, which no one will pretend to say Christ executed in the natural world :

“ Whose fan is in his hand, and He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner ; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Christ himself declares that He was fulfilling this great mission of the Divine Truth :

“ Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”

“ The prince of this world is judged.”

“ I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

This clearing of the world of spirits by a grand process of judgment or separation, was absolutely necessary to the successful preaching and conquests of the new gospel. It was an essential part of the mission of Jesus in his incarnation. It was the primal cause why the old order of thought and life perished ; why the oracles became dumb ; why paganism disappeared ; why the Roman empire declined ; why the ancient languages and literature became extinct. It was indeed the pivotal and turning-point in human history ; and the philosophy of history can never be truly understood



until the changes in the world of spirits are recognized as the great motor powers in human life.

The Christian world lives under the delusion that the Church founded by the apostles is to be perpetual. Its gradual corruption, its end and its judgment were all predicted by Christ himself; and its interior or spiritual history, its perversion of truth, its schisms, its great Catholic and Protestant heresies, its destruction and its judgment, are all described with the utmost minuteness in the spiritual sense of the Apocalypse. This astounding event occurred in the world of spirits, the *sheol* of the Old Testament, the *hades* of the New, in the year 1757; and one human being, whose spiritual sight and hearing were at the time opened into the spiritual world, was a witness of all the accompanying phenomena.

That witness was Emanuel Swedenborg.

The judgment executed by the Lord in the world of spirits at his first advent, delivered the human mind from the accumulated shadows of many centuries, and let in the light of heaven in such a manner that the old religions, the old philosophies, the old arts and sciences, the old governments, the old principles of life and thought were greatly modified or ceased to exist; and the Divine Word,

no longer limited to one nation, became the heritage of all, and the central Sun of our modern civilization.

The last judgment executed in the world of spirits in the year 1757, was another grand dissolution of the accumulated shadows of many centuries; and it is the true and efficient cause of the stupendous changes which have occurred during the last hundred years, and the secret spring of the still more extraordinary events which are impending. The Divine Word is now spiritually opened, which is equivalent to the second coming of the Lord; and its spiritual light will be the centre of a purer and more brilliant civilization than has ever yet dawned upon the race.

The last century has exceeded all the others since the time of Christ, in the development of arts and sciences, in the spread of liberty and liberal principles, in the diffusion of knowledge, in the elevation of the masses, in the amelioration of evils, in the organization of charities; in material prosperity, literary power and artistic splendor; in the activities of free thought; in culture and refinement; in the renunciation of error and the discovery of truth.

What is the cause of these things? Some spontaneous and accidental outburst of mental activity

in the race? Effects are never spontaneous or accidental, but always the legitimate products of efficient causes. Were they the fruit of the seed which was planted by the philosophy and theology of the Middle Ages? No. They sprang into being when the hereditary incubus of the Middle Ages was lifted from the human mind. How was it lifted? By the judgment in the world of spirits, which sent all the old kings and priests and nobles and knights and philosophers and leaders of thought in every department, to heaven or to hell according to their interior natures. When their spheres were removed from the world of spirits, they were removed also from the minds of men; and these latter acquired greater freedom and activity of thought from the new light descending out of heaven.

This is why so many rapid changes are taking place; why the world progresses so fast; why the old landmarks are forsaken; why the old appeals to the traditions of the fathers and to the authority of great names are ineffectual; why revolutions in government, science and religion are so frequent and general that few thinking men have arrived at middle age without having changed their opinions and shifted their positions. The conservatives of

the present day would have been extreme radicals in the past; and the radicals of the present will occupy conservative ground when an extreme radicalism shall be pressing in advance of future generations.

Not only the men from our earth who lingered in the world of spirits until 1757 are judged, but the principles which actuated them, the motives, the life, the thoughts, all the spiritual causes which created and perpetuated the civilization of the past. Whatever was false and baneful in them was cast out, so that they might no longer crush or impede or pervert the human soul. The divine right of kings; the sentiment of caste; the feudal spirit; the pleas for slavery; the infallibility of men or institutions; the superstitions of all; the metaphysical absurdities; the theological dogmas which held the mind in bondage; the evil training and the false education; the false prophets and false Christs; those perversions of the meaning of God's Word which darken the understanding and betray the soul; all these and a thousand other ruling loves and ideas of the past have been judged and cast out for ever from the world of spirits. Evil spirits and misguided and frequently good men will struggle hard to retain something of the old life and its forms,

and to perpetuate them on the earth. They fight against the inevitable.

The transition from the old to the new will be fearful, painful and difficult. With larger liberty comes larger license; with freedom for good, freedom also for evil. Chaos will impend. It will be only the chaos, however, which precedes a new creation—a new heaven and a new earth. A new light is streaming from the uncreated Word; and the Divine Man, one in person and spirit, shall reign with perpetual blessings in the new Paradise of our race.

## CHAPTER XI.

### WHY ARE THESE THINGS NOT BELIEVED?

**T**HE theo-philosophy of Swedenborg is the most beautiful, comprehensive and perfect system ever presented to man. It is the only system in the world which is based upon the Word of God, and claims to have been derived from heaven. The claim itself is so stupendous as to paralyze curiosity by exciting suspicion of insanity in the man who makes it.

“He is mad!” exclaimed the leaders; and for a whole century the church turned its face away from the great light which is to illumine and gladden it for ever.

But readers and believers are found. The strange doctrines pass into all countries, like the seed of heavenly fruit, borne by the four angels who hold the four winds of the earth; and already they are received and loved and lived by thousands of earnest, intelligent and practical men.

“There was method in his madness!” suggest the defenders of the old faith.

"Was he mad at all!" asks some independent thinker, who has been delighted with the doctrine of correspondences, and the wonderful result of its application to the abstrusest problems in philosophy and science.

"He was the messenger of God!" murmurs the Christian who has seen the spiritual sense of the Divine Word break forth in dazzling splendor from his pages.

These questions may not be settled to every one's satisfaction within the next century. But in less than half that time the popular estimate of Swedenborg and his teachings will be very different from what it now is. Why are his disclosures not accepted now? When this philosophy and theology of the angels is presented to intelligent and Christian men, scientists, philosophers and theologians, all earnestly engaged in the study of or search after truth, why is it not immediately recognized and acknowledged?

Something else is needed for the recognition of truth besides its mere presentation.

Our question will be readily answered by recalling some of the profound psychological truths which Swedenborg himself has given us.

A man's love is his life. The delight which he

feels in the exercise of his loves, is the joy and essence of his life. Thought proceeds from love as surely as light from heat. We have no thoughts which are really our own, and which abide with us, except those which flow from, represent and correspond to our affections. We believe what we love and we love what we believe. To change a man's faith you must change his affections. His faith will follow his affections as surely as the shadow follows the moving object. We may change our wills, we may control our emotions, we may substitute a higher love and a nobler passion for a lower, or *vice versa*; but we cannot control our belief. We will involuntarily confirm whatever agrees with and corresponds to our emotional states; we will reject all else as false.

What affections of the human mind cause the spiritual darkness which the heavenly light of the New Church finds it impossible at present to dissipate?

Outside of the Christian sphere, there are two great classes who cannot see the truth of the heavenly doctrines:

First: Those who are immersed in sense or in states of external self-love. Men who are devoted to the acquisition of money, to the pursuit of glory



or power, to the aggrandizement of themselves, to the displays of fashion and the pleasures of the senses, whose delight is in these things—all such are spiritually turned away from the Lord and heaven, and cannot see religious truth however clearly presented. If angels were to appear daily in the streets and preach to them, their ideas would go in at one ear and out at the other; for there are no heavenly affections in their souls to seize upon divine truths and clasp them to the heart as the very pearls of wisdom for which they had been searching and sighing.

Secondly: Those who are filled with the spirit of self-culture, which is only a more interior and subtle self-love. These believe in human development unaided by revelation, in nature and progress independent of Christ and his Word. They are the positivists, the rationalists, the communists, the spiritualists and others of the present day—a vast and increasing class. They may extricate themselves from the bondage of a gross sensualism, but it is only to fall victims to the Beelzebub of spiritual pride and the self-conceit of scientific culture. These are blind to the heavenly doctrines of the New Church, which teach us the deep-seated evils of our natures, the utter finiteness of our powers,

and our absolute helplessness for good, except as we look believingly to the Divine Man—Jesus Christ.

Surely these doctrines, so full of Christ and his Word, so beautiful, so tender, so true, so holy, will ere long find a recognition and a warm reception in many circles of the faithful and pious children of God.

There are two great classes in the Christian church who reject the Lord at his second advent, and justify themselves with apparently strong reasons for doing so.

One class is blinded by strong affection for the doctrines of their church, which they believe to be essential to the salvation of their souls;—doctrines which were imbibed in childhood, which have been implanted in their hearts and embalmed in their memories, and sanctified by the associations of the past and the hopes of the future. Men who love their doctrines with a spiritual ardor which would brave martyrdom for their sake, cannot possibly see any truth in a system which controverts the fundamental positions of their cherished faith. Intensity of affection, however, proves nothing to be true; for pagans and heretics and enthusiasts of all kinds have been just as earnest and just as

blind ; but it is a sufficient reason why the divine truth now revealed, is not received by those who in heart and life are nearest to its spirit.

The second class in the Christian Church who are impenetrable to the rays of the new light, consist of those whose affections are more external ; who love their Church as an outward organization, its ritual, its ministers, its people, its history, its learning, its influence and the whole sphere that emanates from it. This feeling is near akin to party feeling in politics, and to national feeling in different countries ; a feeling that weakens if it does not destroy all genuine catholic and cosmopolitan sentiment. It has indeed a certain necessity and a certain use, as political parties and separate nationalities have ; but its inordinate sway leads to bigotry and narrow-mindedness. People of this type are utterly averse to the consideration of any spiritual matters outside of their traditional sphere of thought and feeling. The bare suspicion that Swedenborg may be right, never crosses their minds.

Each of these types is an enemy to the spiritual truths taught in the internal sense of the Word of God. Sometimes two of them or even all are combined in the same character. Imagine a man

whose soul is wedded to the dogmas of the old theology, who is thoroughly devoted to the external things of some evangelical Church, who has a high degree of pride in his own spiritual knowledge and culture, and who has a keen eye to his own temporal interests. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for such a man to comprehend or believe the truths of the NEW AGE.

Truths are received into the memory as food into the stomach. They will be found indigestible and unassimilable, and will be rejected, unless there is something in the emotional nature which has an affinity for them and draws them to itself and incorporates them with its own being. Truths can never be made a part of a man's faith and insinuated into his life, until they have become the objects of his affection.

How is it possible, then, for the heavenly doctrines of the New Church to be implanted in the affections of men?

There are three universal affections insinuated by the Lord in some degree into all men, the basis of our knowledge, the sources of our happiness, the badges of our spiritual life, distinguishing it from that of the brute. These affections are *the*

*love of truth, the love of beauty and the love of goodness.*

All our advances in knowledge come necessarily from the *love* of knowing, of comparing, of analyzing and of understanding. The delight in the acquisition of truth is a primal and necessary delight in the human mind. The pursuit of truth is frequently prosecuted from selfish ends—the love of glory, the love of power or the love of wealth. The truths acquired are also perverted or sectarianized so as to be accommodated to the state of the affections. But there is such a thing as a love of truth for the sake of the truth, without regard to its source or associations.

This affection of knowing, comparing, analyzing, understanding and believing or disbelieving is not only fundamental but it is irrepressible. It will finally lead men to examine Swedenborg and his doctrines. They will not be contented with hearsay. They will not be influenced by prejudice. They will be animated by that purer, superior, abstract love of truth, which precedes and will finally dominate the inferior and concrete loves of sensual and external things, of traditions and dogmas and churches. Swedenborg will be studied as a phenomenon; explored as a new continent;

analyzed as a new substance. The misrepresentations about him will be detected; the exaggerations discarded; the rubbish cleared away; and the *facts* brought out into full view.

It will then be discovered that the science of correspondences is the key to all other sciences, and that a spiritual sense pervades the Word of God, elevating the minds of men into somewhat of angelic light. It will be made so plain that none can question it.

This clear-cut, geometrical demonstration of the truths of the New Church will be, however, only the first or preliminary proceeding. It cannot make any man believe them or love them until some affections of the soul are excited to sympathetic relations with them.

What are these affections? In the first place, the love of the beautiful. Who does not know the sweet and pleasing sensations which are created in the perceptive faculties by the beauties of nature, by the sight of flower-gardens and green lawns, of the blue mountains in the distance, the far roll of the emerald sea, the golden sky of evening, and the boundless dome of night crowded with its celestial fires? There are similar sensations of delight in the contemplation of great truths. The

abstract truths of geometry impart a positive pleasure to many minds. Every science has its special delight comparable to the odor of flowers or the charms of music. And a great System of Truth, embracing all things, spirit and matter, God and nature; a system vast, sublime, coherent, harmonious, fills the soul with delight in proportion to the conception it forms of its grandeur and symmetry. This delight creates faith.

"The harmony of a science," says Lord Bacon, "where each part supports the other, is the true and short confutation of all the smaller objections."

The rational faculty grasps truth; the æsthetic faculty enjoys it; but there is a higher faculty or power, seated in the heart or will, and that faculty uses it for the ends it was designed to accomplish; and that use of the truth is attended by a spiritual delight, the joy of angels which passes all understanding.

The love of goodness is, in the last analysis, *the love of use*—the delight felt in adapting the wisest means to the best ends. This celestial love is given us by the Lord in proportion to our living faith in Him and our charity to the neighbor, or according as we have religiously kept the divine commandments. This heavenly affection enables us to per-

ceive, intuitively as it were, the causes and qualities of things better than the intellect can know them. He that has this divine love of use in his heart, recognizes the doctrinal truths of the New Church very clearly, for he perceives their power to regenerate the individual soul, to renovate the church, to re-organize society on heavenly principles, and to restore, by means of the spiritual sense of the Word, the lost communication between angels and men.

The three great affections, the love of truth, the love of beauty and the love of use, are at work in all men and at all times with different degrees of power. They are all at work in every individual mind which examines the heavenly doctrines; and there is no man, however bigoted and sectarian, who will not be forced to cry out occasionally over the pages of Swedenborg, How rational! how beautiful! how pure and elevating!

Why cannot the sectarian see the doctrines of the New Church in *all* their truth and *all* their beauty and *all* their adaptability to the needs of the soul? Because he loves his dogmas, his church, his minister, his people, better than he loves the pure truth, which he can never see until he is ready to sacrifice all these and everything else for it. Be-

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cause his æsthetic faculties are uncultivated or his ideas of beauty are narrow and conventional. Because his love of use has too large an element of selfishness and worldliness in it, for that grand spiritual ideal of use which gives a spontaneous insight into truth.

On this love of truth for its own sake and on the gradual emancipation of the human heart, by divine influences, from these inferior loves which prevent its discovery, the future progress of the world depends. These are the sturdy workmen who are clearing away the old and tough and unsightly weeds of error from the garden of the human soul, and who will plant in their stead the perennial flowers of beauty and love.

The human race will outlive and outgrow all its imperfect states of evil and falsity, by a great, organic and inevitable process. The divine fire from heaven which is kindling the Christian heart, will illumine the Christian mind to see the divine truth. And he who surrenders all the theology and philosophy in the world for the spiritual sense of the Scriptures, revealed through Swedenborg, will not lose his life but find it.

The doctrines of the New Church embody the highest truth, and are therefore capable of ravish-

ing the soul with the keenest sense of beauty and leading to the most thoroughly practical uses of life. There is a knowledge-loving faculty in man which must be gratified and which seeks to know truth for its own sake. There is an æsthetic sense which is delighted with harmony, symmetry and beauty in nature or in art, in philosophy as well as in poetry. There is a love of use, born of goodness in the soul, which recognizes the fitness and qualities of ideas as well as of things, and which seeks and finds them for the good they may do. These are the causes which are for ever silently at work, preparing mankind for the reception and acknowledgment of the doctrines of the New Church; which are therefore inevitable:

“Inevitable as the life that starts  
From the deep bosom of the wintry snows,  
And bursts serenely on the blossoming air;  
And shines through all the green and silver spring;  
And makes the glimmer of that golden light  
With which the perfect Summer crowns her brow.”

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